BACHELOR THESIS

Avoidance of returns in e-commerce in Germany

Jana Mürdter

October 2019 – January 2020

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Bachelor Thesis

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Declaration of Authorship

I herewith declare that I have composed the present thesis myself and without use of any other than the cited sources and aids. Sentences or parts of sentences quoted literally are marked with double quotes. Other references regarding the statement and scope are indicated by full details of the publications concerned.
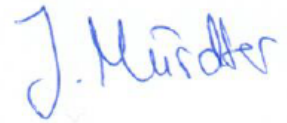
The thesis in the same or similar form has not been submitted to any examination body and has not been published. This thesis was not, even in part, used in another examination or as a course performance. Furthermore, I declare that the submitted written (bound) copies of the present thesis and the version submitted on a data carrier are consistent with each other in contents.

Jana Mürdter   Karlsruhe, 09.01.2020
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Preface

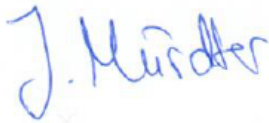Nowadays almost every company in the online retail business is confronted with returns due to the customer-friendly claim of withdrawal for distance selling contracts. Therefore, it is important to deal with correct returns management. This report intends to provide companies with a solution to reduce the ever-increasing number of returns through a customer-friendly alternative.

This bachelor thesis contains a research for the improvement of returns management in a company. This paper was written by Jana Mürdter, a fourth-year student of "Equine Business Management" at AERES University of Applied Sciences, Dronten, Netherlands.

The origin of this work lies in the module AAFP, which describes the final phase of the study "Equine Business Management". This module consists an internship and the preparation of a final bachelor thesis.

I, Jana Mürdter, would like to thank the logistics centre of BLANCO GmbH & Co. KG, which had a significant influence on my work during my final internship and supported me in writing this proposal for my bachelor thesis with its diverse insights into the field of logistics.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Gert Wim Stoffer. He always offered me support with all my questions and was always able to help me with his new perspectives and is therefore also an important part in the development of this report.

Jana Mürdter,

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Summary

The topic of this bachelor thesis is a market research of the German returns behaviour in order to find out how companies in the online trade can best prevent customers from returning the ordered article.

Returns are and remain an important part of the business model in online retailing. Without the possibility of free returns, online retailers would quickly lose their customers. Therefore, companies must weigh up between customer and cost orientation. On the one hand, e-commerce benefits from the customer-friendly right of withdrawal, on the other hand, this often results in high return rates, which in turn pose a logistical challenge for the company and at the same time put the company's profitability to the test.

The first chapter of the bachelor thesis focuses on the theoretical information about returns management and thus provides the framework for the bachelor thesis. It is discussed which preventive and reactive measures are available for the avoidance of returns and how they can be used. Through the preventive returns management, the number of returns can be influenced. The profit is increased by permanently reducing the returns rate without weakening customer loyalty, but in the best case can even be strengthened and can bring a value added for the customer. Reactive returns management is primarily responsible for reducing the cost of returns already incurred. By quickly reprocessing the goods, the products can be resold more quickly and thus lead to higher profits. However, returns should not be taken for granted. Just by optimizing the product description and product images, the customer can be influenced even before the order is completed by making the selection of the right product as easy as possible. In this way, for example, multiple orders can be avoided, which account for a large proportion of returns.

In the second chapter of the Bachelor thesis the reader can find more information about the material and the method. On the one hand, German society is asked about its returns in a survey, and on the other hand, a company is asked about the difficulties in online trade with regard to returns by means of an interview.

Based on Chapter Two, Chapter Three explains the results of the different methods. The reader is given an insight into the results of the survey and interview. The results of the survey are presented with diagrams to give a clear and precise picture.

After the analysis, Chapter Four goes into more detail on the results of the research and provides a conclusion and a recommendation based on it.

Returns can never be completely avoided. Often one is powerless over the taste of the customer and cannot avoid the return itself. That is why it is important for the company to put a lot of emphasis on quality within the company. By avoiding returns that are based on mistakes made by the company itself, a large amount of returns can be saved. Furthermore, the company must pay attention to a clear, attractive and above all informative website. The customer orders based on information on the website and customer reviews. The more informative the descriptions and the better the customer reviews, the fewer incorrect and multiple orders will be.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Today it is self-evident to order products of any kind directly via the Internet. So-called online shops are based on product descriptions, videos, pictures and customer reviews, where the customer can get an idea of the desired product and eventually makes the decision to buy the product. The final purchase decision is not made until the goods have been delivered to the customer. The customer has a realistic idea of the desired product through the online shop but could not check it in advance. For example, he could not try on the clothes and does not know whether they fit well. He could not check whether the new protective cover of the smartphone really fits or could not assess the colour of the new bed sheets correctly. Customers prefer to have something sent to them and then send it back if they don't like it, rather than calling customer service to get unclear details about the product. When buying on the Internet, this cognitive and emotional decision can only be made after the delivery of the goods (Billomat, 2017).

If the general standard in online retailing was a satisfied customer who is always satisfied with the goods that are delivered, there would be hardly any need to pay attention to returns management. In reality, many orders are returned within the cancellation period. This is not only a big disadvantage for the environment, but also a big challenge for companies who must deal with high costs (Hartmann, 2011).

1.1 Theoretical Framework

This research will concentrate on the German market due to the complexity of the topic and the great influence of culture on returns management. Therefore, the German culture and economy will be explained in detail. The first chapter describes returns and returns management in more detail. The relevance of returns in online retailing will be discussed also in greater detail. Returns cannot be completely avoided, as they are part of every modern business model and the customer can no longer imagine life without them. This chapter will discuss which active and target-oriented solutions can secure the competitiveness of a company.

1.1.1 Problem definition

Germany is one of the countries with the highest return rates in Europe. For the bachelor's thesis, the target group is therefore limited to customers from Germany (Pohlgeers, 2018). Since this research will deal with the German society, in appendix 1 the external factors are described in comparison to those of one of Germanys most important trade - and neighbouring countries, the Dutch society (Thuis & Stuive, 2016). Returns are an unpopular topic in every company with an online shop. The reason is simple: For the company, returns are a major expense in terms of processing returns and all the related follow-up measures. The German "Handelsblatt" newspaper itself described the returns as "the number one profit killer" for a company. The "Handelsblatt" is not wrong: according to a study by the research institute "ibi research", the online retailer must bear costs of 20 euros per return (C. Kontio, 2013). However, online retailers are faced with the dilemma of having to offer customers a generous returns policy. On the one hand, this has a positive effect on the customer's payments and thus on his customer value, on the other hand, it reduces the customer's value through the payments associated with the return. A customer-oriented returns policy is characterized above all by the repayment of the entire purchase amount (Pei, Paswan, & Yan, 2014), a free return (Lantz & Hjort, 2013), long return periods, as well as a small effort for the customer in the context of the return process (Janakiraman, Narayan, & Ordónez, 2012).

In fact, the number of parcels returned by consumers is enormous: according to researchers, an estimated 280 million return parcels were sent back to Germany in 2018. On average, 16.3 percent of

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the parcels delivered were returned (Jauernig & Braun, 2019). Particularly in the textile and clothing industry, up to 50 percent of the articles will be returned by customers, who try them on and return the unwanted goods (Hartmann, 2011). Up to 30 percent of those returns are no longer as good as new. Goods that are no longer classified as new are processed as far as possible, sold via cheap channels or even disposed of. Nevertheless, most online retailers do not charge shipping costs for returns, as returns play a central role in customer loyalty (Bergmann, 2019).   The whole process is done at the expense of the retailer. In the industry, this phenomenon is already referred to as "buying bulimia" (C. Kontio, 2013).

The giants of the textile industry, like Amazon and Zalando, took drastic measures in 2013. Amazon, for example, closed accounts and informed customers with the note "We must inform you (...) that we will unfortunately not be able to accept any further orders in the future and close your Amazon account with immediate effect due to the fact that the number of returns in your customer account exceeds the usual number for households" (C. Kontio, 2013).

Zalando has also acted against the high number of returnees. Although advertising with free returns has only helped the online fashion retailer to achieve high growth, the extremely high return rate is Zalando's biggest problem. Zalando itself states that it has a return rate of up to 50 percent. Unlike most providers, Zalando offers a cancellation period of up to 100 days. In a test phase, Zalando tried to use e-mails to draw attention to the return behaviour of certain customers. Other customers were forbidden to pay with invoice, so they had to pay for their goods in advance. Zalando gained a lot of indignation and anger from their customers, that is why they stopped with this procedure. (C. Kontio, 2013).

Amazon and Zalando can afford the procedures of returns because of their leading market position, but small and medium-sized retailers cannot. To remain competitiveness, they must offer similar benefits to customers as market leaders do. They also will have to deal with soiled clothing, pressed-in lipsticks or worn earrings If the retailer does not deal extensively with this issue, it can become a big risk for the business success. (Der Tagesspiegel, 2018).

But not only online retailers of clothing and shoes have this problem. Online retailers of household items such as kitchen sinks, waste separation systems and water taps also have similar problems. They also receive and process large quantities of returns on a weekly basis (Hintermayer, 2019). The aim of this work is to examine the problem of returns. E-commerce and its development will be examined in order to obtain a general overview of online business. Then the challenge of returns management will be analysed. This includes comparing measures for handling returns and reactive returns management, but also measures for avoiding returns, preventive returns management.

In the last chapter of this report the material and the method will be discussed. It will be explained how the market analysis will be performed.

1.1.2   E-Commerce

For many companies in Germany, e-commerce is a promising sales channel where new markets and customers can be reached. At the beginning of 2011, 82 percent of all companies in Germany and 79 percent of all private households were using the internet for online shopping, communication or data exchange. The figure below shows the development of Business-to-customer (B2C) e-commerce sales in Germany between 1999 and 2018. According to this forecast, sales are expected to rise sharply as in previous years, with statisticians expecting sales of around 57.8 billion euros. (Bergen, 2016). This means that the growth rate of e-commerce over the past ten years has almost exceeded ten percent. (WTV, 2019).

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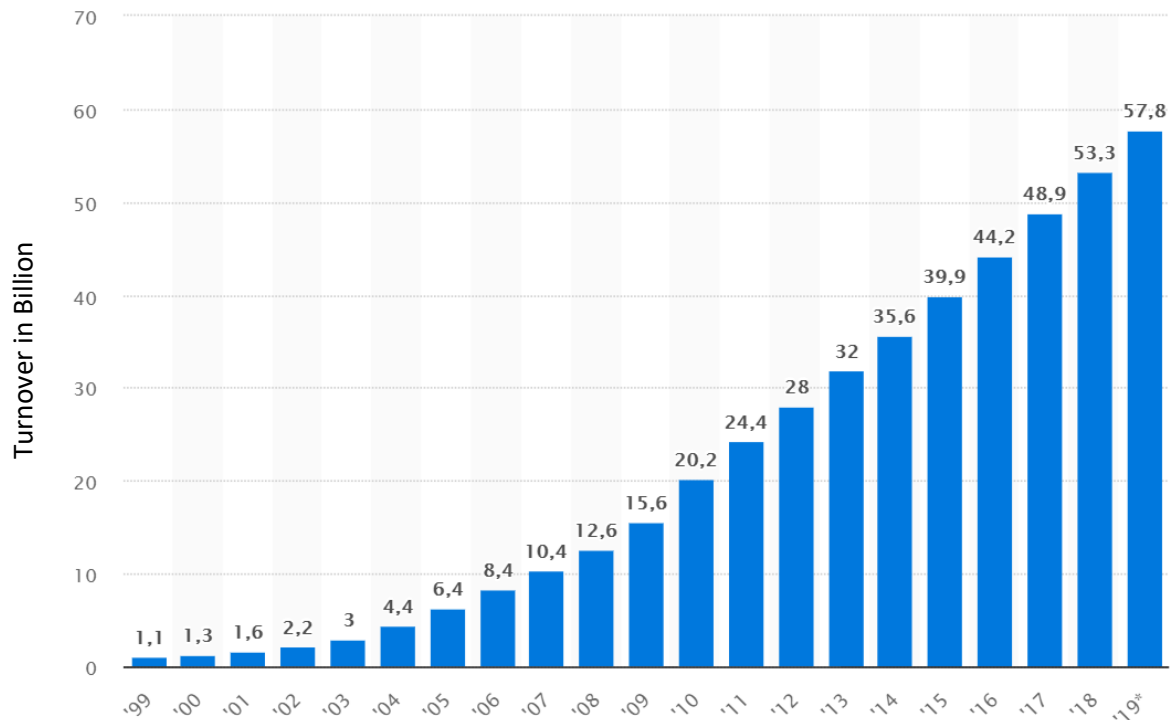
FIGURE 1 REVENUES FROM E-COMMERCE IN GERMANY 1999 TO 2018 AND A FORECAST FOR 2019 (RABE, 2019)

As part of the economy, industry deals with the commercial extraction, processing and further processing of raw materials or intermediate products into material goods (Schmidt, 2019). Other industries, such as more and more florists and do-it-yourself shops (Brandt, 2019) and also traditional stationary retailers like Peek & Cloppenburg (Cunningham, Hofstedt, Meer, & Schmitt, 2015), also want to be part of this area of sales, which is why more and more companies are using e-commerce as a new opportunity. This is a major advantage, especially for small and medium-sized companies. They can quickly create an online shop in the early stages of their business and use it to achieve a wide range (Bergen, 2016).

Here, the question arises what e-commerce is and what distinguishes electronic commerce in the first place. An e-commerce is a part of "electronic business", which includes the purchase and sale of goods and services via electronic connections. It has two important characteristics. First e-commerce is understood to meet any type of business transaction, such as the purchase or sale of goods and services. Secondly, it is understood to meet all electronically processed business processes where the parties involve electronical communication, without having physically confronted with each other. (Winter, Alisch, & Arentzen, 2011). This means that not only convenient ordering from the Internet is part of e-commerce, but also any other services, such as customer service or online banking, which are required for online trading.

Some countries limit the definition of e-commerce to a certain extent. The German Trade Association, for example, differentiates this definition by one point. Due to the rapid development of mobile devices, m-commerce must also be added to e-commerce. This is limited solely to buying and selling with the help of mobile devices

In summary, e-commerce can be defined as an electronic trade with all associated processes. The core of e-commerce is the buying and selling of products and services via the internet and its

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associated processes such as customer service and online banking. (Winter, Alisch, & Arentzen, 2011).

Amazon, Otto and Zalando are still some of the largest online retailers in Germany. Together with MediaMarkt and Notebooksbilliger, they account for more than 35 percent of total sales and therefore belong to the top 100 online retailers. General, clothing and consumer electronics are still the key segments of online retailing. In addition to these brands, there is still plenty of room for specialty shops and niche products. (Langer, 2019)

1.1.3 Development of the logistics of online shops

More and more companies and retailers are discovering the advantages and benefits of their own online shop. In the clothing / textiles / shoes product group alone, companies were able to increase sales by 4.4% to €5,400 million between 2009 and 2010, and an end to this development is not in sight. At the same time, the proportion of sales generated by retailers' stationary business is declining (R. Bommers, 2019).

The increasing use of online shops is becoming more and more of a problem for the logistics and presents them with new challenges. Customers expect on-time delivery without additional shipping costs. This brings with it a major conflict for logistics: the ever faster demand for delivery while minimizing costs. The task of the logisticians is therefore to be able to handle the contradictory demands all together. The supply chain must therefore often be redesigned to meet the enormous challenges. (R. Bommers, 2019)

This becomes clear when considering the different requirements of the various distribution channels. If a company has several branches, it can plan the tours optimally in several cycles in order to generate an optimal workload. If an online shop is then integrated into the company and thus also the direct delivery to the customer, the situation changes. The orders must be delivered much faster, which means that an optimal utilization of the transports can almost not be achieved. The end customers are usually often spread over large regions and must also be supplied with smaller packages. In addition, it can happen that the customer does not order anything on one day and on another day all customers order at once. This pushes the logistical capacities to their limits. The unpredictability of customers is the big question mark in the world of logistics. To be able to control them, logistics must be able to react flexibly. (R. Bommers, 2019)

In addition, there is nowadays also the Same Day Delivery. This concept includes a delivery of the ordered goods on the same day of the order in an online shop. This is a big advantage compared to the usual delivery time of two to three days, especially if the customer has a short-term need. The way to a stationary trade can be replaced completely, so that the customer can order and receive the goods comfortably from home. According to a survey, this type of fast delivery is of great importance to 27 percent of customers, and for respondents between the ages of eighteen and 37 this is an important option for 34 to 37 percent. And free shipping of items was also one of the most important points in front of a large number of respondents. This shows how important the option of same-day or next-day delivery is for customers. (Löhr & Schäfer, 2018)

Amazon has been the first in Germany to revolutionize the logistics industry in this aspect. In November 2015, the online retailer introduced the Same Day Service. In the past, customers had to rely on the stationary trade when they needed an article at short notice. To save customers this way, Amazon offers its customers the option of same-day delivery. (Oenning, 2015)

The logistics structure is based on regional warehouses, which are usually set up near large cities. In this way, the ordered goods can be delivered quickly to the customer and at the same time avoids

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long transports of the goods. It should never be forgotten, that jobs in stationary trade are endangered by declining sales due to the increasingly popular online shops. Online trade is important for the current development of society, but the online retailers must always keep in mind that many people depend on their jobs in stationary trade. (Oenning, 2015)

TABLE 1 THE LARGEST ONLINE RETAILERS 2018 (LANGER, 2019)

Place	Onlineshop-URL	E-Commerce turnover 2018 (mio)	Main product segment
1	www.amazon.de	9.278,1	Generalist
2	www.otto.de	3.200,0	Generalist
3	www.zalando.de	1.441,0	Bekleidung
4	www.mediamarkt.de	987,7	Unterhaltungselektronik
5	www.notebooksbilliger.de	878,5	Unterhaltungselektronik
6	www.lidl.de	757,3	Generalist
7	www.bonprix.de	601,1	Bekleidung
8	www.cyberport.de	554,7	Unterhaltungselektronik
9	www.saturn.de	546,2	Unterhaltungselektronik
10	www.alternate.de	524,5	Unterhaltungselektronik
11	www.conrad.de	509,0	Unterhaltungselektronik
12	www.apple.com/de/	486,4	Unterhaltungselektronik
13	www.docmorris.de	457,0	Drogerie & Gesundheit
14	www.tchibo.de	450,0	Generalist
15	www.hm.com/de/	449,6	Bekleidung

1.1.4   Return Management

Returns

In online trading, the word "return" describes the goods that the customer returns to the retailer. These goods are preceded by a customer order, which was ordered in the online shop of the retailer and was delivered to the customer. Should the goods not meet the customer's expectations, or should the goods be damaged, the customer has the right of withdrawal and the right to send back the goods according to the legal regulations of distance selling. (Ehrhardt Partner Group, 2019)

Since this is still a very general definition, different authors have designed different classification schemes. Here, five categories have emerged: (Hjort, 2010)

- Consumer Returns: These are goods that customers send back to the online retailer.
- Marketing Returns: The products that belong to this category are intended to have a sales-promoting effect but are not accepted by the customer.
- Product Recalls: These are products that are affected by the product recall. Defects, safety and quality problems are usually the cause.
- Asset Returns: These returns are assets that belong to the dealer and were required for delivery, such as containers or pallets.
- Environmental Returns: This category includes almost all returns that must be returned to the dealer for regular disposal due to economic aspects or legal requirements such as environmental laws (Hjort, 2010)

This research focuses on consumer returns. The aim is to find out to what extent a company has influence on customer returns and how these returns can be avoided.

Regulation of distance contracts

The rights and obligations of customers are regulated in the German Civil Code (BGB) in the sections §§ 312c ff. The BGB refers to contracts which are concluded between a company and a consumer using long-distance channels of communication. There is no personal encounter between the two parties within the context of the completion of the purchase contract. Since June 2014, the new rules which are based on the EU Consumer Protection Directive 2011/83/EU apply to the right of withdrawal and return shipping costs. Companies can also decide for themselves whether they want to exceed these minimum requirements or not (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017).

When concluding distance selling contracts, the customer has a fundamental right of revocation of 14 days. This is stipulated by the legislator in accordance with §§ 355 Paragraph 2 BGB (German Civil Code). Unlike before the implementation of the new regulation in accordance with the EU Consumer Protection Directive, a clear declaration must be enclosed with the revocation of the article when it is returned. This can be done by e-mail, fax, letter or via the revocation form which is provided by the supplier. After the revocation has been received, the goods which are returned must be sent back within the period given by the online retailer. In general, the retailer must refund the purchase price to the customer within 14 days after receiving the return. The method of payment must be the same as for the sale of the goods. (Bont, 2016)

Return management

The return management is responsible for the functional tasks that the company must coordinate after the return. There are several different measures and activities that must be considered.

"Returns management is an essential task of return logistics and customer management in which the flow of goods, finances and the flow of information between the sender and the supplier of a good is planned, controlled and monitored." (Möhring, Gabler Wirtschatslexikon, 2014)

In addition to the flow of goods, returns management also includes the flow of finance and information. The flow of goods defines the return shipment of the goods by the customer to the retailer, the acceptance of the goods and the inspection of the goods in the retailer's warehouse, as well as the preparation and re-storage of the goods. Regarding the financial flow, it is important to ensure that the payment already made by the customer needs to be reversed during the returns process. In connection with this, a correct flow of information is also very important. There must be a good communication with the customer so that he is kept sufficiently informed about the progress of the goods during the returns process (Asdecker, Retourenmanagement- Eine Literaturrecherche, 2013).

In summary, returns management comprises the planning, execution and control of returns flows as well as the associated information and financial flows, with the intention of supporting the overarching objectives of the value creation system. This is usually profit maximization, which is also the goal of returns management. Measures for returns management are a well-thought-out planning, execution and control of returns.

Two central tasks are the reactive processing of returns as well as the prevention and avoidance of returns. It is important to minimize the costs associated with returns. (Bergen, 2016)

1.1.5   Relevance of returns in online trading

Returns are associated with high costs, which are why the major goal of returns management is to minimize costs in order to help maximize the company's profits (Siebels, 2017). It must also be ensured that cost reduction measures do not have a negative impact on revenues. Returns can themselves generate a positive value amount (Bergen, 2016). This chapter deals with the relevance of returns, their tasks and goals.

Net returns value

The net returns value is relevant for this decision. Now the online retailer is faced with the question of when the offer of a return is advantageous. Cost minimization only leads to profit maximization if the measures for return avoidance have no effect on the revenues. However, this requirement is not permanent with regard to returns management, since returns can also have a positive value contribution, which is not necessarily monetary. (Sucky, 2011)

Figure 2 illustrates the net returns value in the context of reactive and preventive returns management. The Net returns value can be calculated as followed:
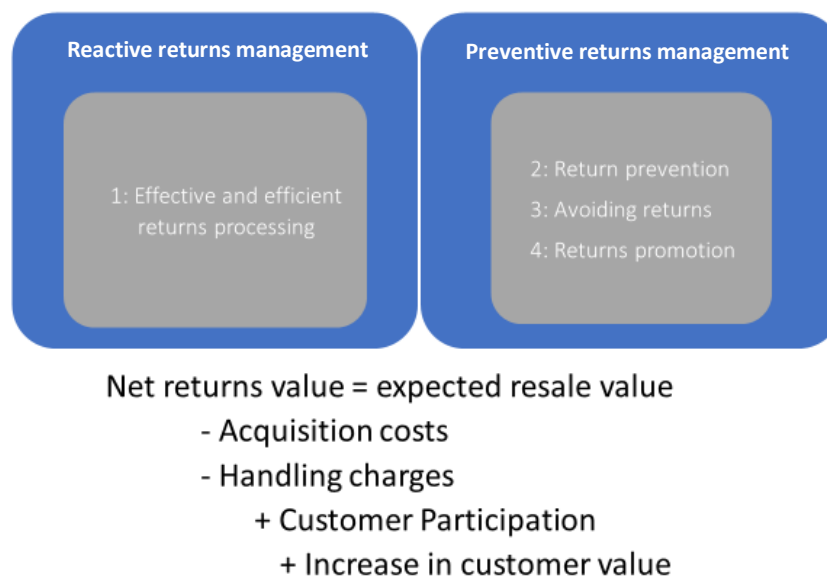
FIGURE 2 NET RETURNS VALUE (ASDECKER, RETOURENMANAGEMENT IM VERSANDHANDEL, 2014)

This value calculation requires closer examination. The expected resale value is the amount the trader can earn on the market after the return. Preparation work may be required. Depending on the product, it may also make economic sense to sell individual parts. The term acquisition costs describe all necessary expenses required for the return of the goods, in particular shipping costs and waiver costs.

The handling charges include all those expenses that arise as a result of internal processing. Should a return participation, value replacement or similar be agreed with the customer, also this amount flows into the calculation of the net return value as plus (E. Sucky, 2011). Finally, also the increase of the customer value must be considered. The returns management usually increases customer satisfaction and thus customer loyalty. This also has a positive effect on the value. (Bergen, 2016)

Of course, there are different approaches. Amazon, for example, focuses on maximizing customer satisfaction with a high loss in value and the resulting negative net return value. Other companies take care to maintain a positive net return value, but customer satisfaction is usually the first priority.

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If the customer feels well advised and is satisfied with the purchase, the customer can also be won as a permanent customer. (Sucky, 2011)

Tasks and objectives of returns management

Depending on how many values the retailer includes in the calculation of his net returns value, a positive or negative value results. If the value is positive, prevention activities in relation to returns are not needed, since returns management shows a positive performance balance here. If this is not the case, the company must pay attention to various factors. The focus should be on processing, preventing, avoiding and promoting returns. There are four different tasks for returns management: (Asdecker, Retourenmanagement im Versandhandel, 2014)

The handling and processing of returns are two very important tasks of returns management. It must be ensured that the costs which arise during the procedure of the return are kept as low as possible. This means that the control of the return must be carried out as quickly and cost-effectively as possible. Preventive returns management should not be underestimated and is often aimed by companies. Each task is responsible for reducing returns. The difference lies in the different approaches (Asdecker, Retourenmanagement im Versandhandel, 2014).

When it comes to avoiding returns, everything revolves around the activities that contribute to eliminating the causes of returns. The third important task here is the improvement of forward-looking value-adding activities. First, an analysis of the causes of the returns has to be carried out in order to be able to analyse the exact reasons for the returns. If the products are often sent in the wrong colour, proactive action can be taken against them. (Bergen, 2016)

The prevention and avoidance of returns is countered by the promotion of returns, the fourth task. As the name suggests, this is about securing returns or even increasing returns. Manufacturers and retailers often profit from the positive net returns value which is achieved by taking back old equipment and support corresponding campaigns. For this the online retailer must inform the customer about the possibility of returns or returning mechanisms. (Bergen, 2016).

A good example of this procedure is Apple. With its trade-in-program, the company enables the trade-in of older devices in Apple stores. In return, the customer receives a discount on one of the current iPhone models by crediting the value of the older model to the new price (Hüfner, 2019).

1.2 Preventive and reactive returns management

1.2.1 Preventive returns management

The goal of any online retailer must be to minimize returns. Companies across all industries need advice and practical tips on how to avoid or at least minimize returns. Many online retailers offer a free return service for the customer, which in turn means increased costs for the customer. In order to minimize costs, it is important that customers refrain from returning items after purchasing the product (Löhr & Schäfer, 2018). This strategy is also known as preventive returns management. Preventive returns management should counteract the probability of a possible return during and after the order. One method is avoidance of returns before the purchase. This already begins with the information and selection process, since also assistance with the purchase decision of the customer is part of the preventive return's management. The customer's purchasing behaviour can be influenced by the conscious selection of products with helpful descriptions of the products. The second method is avoidance of returns after the purchase. It only occurs after the goods have been delivered to the customer. This method of returns prevention tries to influence the return decision. Both approaches aim to reduce the return rate and should solve the return problem before it even occurs. (Asdecker, Karl, & Sucky, Retourenmanagement als Erfolgsfaktor des Handels, 2017)

Avoidance of returns before the purchase

Return avoidance includes all activities that contribute to eliminating the cause of returns before and after you place an order. Most causes for returning items are:

1. Incorrect product or size ordered
2. Product no longer needed
3. Product does not match description on website or in catalogue
4. Product did not meet customer`s expectations
5. Company shipped wrong product or size
6. Several variants ordered for selection
7. Mis ordering
8. Delivery time too long

Avoidance measures should always be directed in the direction of the return reasons. The abovementioned causes result in numerous approaches for different solutions. (French & Discenza, 2006)

Approximately 87 percent of online retailers agree that a detailed product description with an accurate product presentation is one of the most important factors in reducing the return rate. These descriptions help the customers - through realistic estimations and assessments - to obtain an accurate picture of the product without being disappointed by the colour or having ordered the wrong size. Detailed product information is a great help in the selection process, especially for those customers who tend to place selection orders. Here it is important to show not only the standard article descriptions provided by the manufacturer on the shop website as information, but also own adapted article descriptions to make the item more attractive to the customer (Deges, Grundlagen des E-Commerce, 2019).

 Not only the description is important, also the presentation of the articles has a large influence on the returns. It is advisable to use high-resolution images to be able to offer a full-screen view. In this way the customer can zoom in on the picture himself and, if it is possible, also use the 360-degree view. This helps the customer's decision, as the zoom makes details of the product visible which would otherwise not be visible. The time and effort involved in creating such high-resolution images, or even a 360-degree view, is associated with more costs, which is why this must also be weighed up

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economically. Although more costs are incurred, it is advisable to invest in qualitative descriptions and images. It is also important to indicate the dimensions of kitchen and household items such as refrigerators, vacuum cleaners or kitchen sinks. The customer must be provided with various details such as length, width and height in order to assess whether the article actually fits in the desired place. If the item itself is to be installed, it is also important to provide the customer with instructions on how to install the article (Hintermayer, 2019). These measures do not only serve to avoid returns, but also encourage new customers to buy articles (Cunningham, Hofstedt, Meer, & Schmitt, 2015).

Online retailers who are active in the clothing and accessories category often struggle with the problem of size specifications. This can be countered by providing size and dimension tables. By specifying the chest, waist and hip circumference, sleeve or leg length, the customer can get a detailed picture of the clothing item and a selection order can be avoided or reduced. Also, the indication of the size, which the model wears in combination with the size, is a helpful tool for customers, since they can get a realistic idea of the clothing on the body this way (Kemkes, 2015).

Tools for size determination also counteract the return of clothes. By entering the customer's body measurement data, misjudgements can be avoided. Today "Virtual changing rooms" can already be used for individualized fitting and size advice. The online eyewear retailers are the pioneers of this method. They offer a virtual product sample of a wide variety of eyewear models through "Augmented Reality". The customer can upload a picture of himself in the online shop and feel how different eyewear models fit to his own head shape (Cunningham, Hofstedt, Meer, & Schmitt, 2015). This can be advantageous for other product groups. In the case of household devices, a picture of the kitchen could be shown, through which the system recognises whether or not the sink or oven fits into the space provided (Hintermayer, 2019). During the virtual fitting of garments, various indications can be displayed, e.g. that the garment is too close to the body or that the trouser leg is not long enough. (Cunningham, Hofstedt, Meer, & Schmitt, 2015).

In addition to the design of the product description, another important factor is customer evaluation and customer advice. As soon as the customer is unsure to buy a certain product, he tries to decide by comparison. According to a survey, 91 percent of respondents appreciate the availability of customer reviews. This strengthens the credibility of the product. The online retailer himself can also benefit from this approach. If a product is sent back too often because it is too big or too small, he can adapt his product description accordingly to avoid returns of this kind. (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017) This is often the case with products that are not needed so often. Items like kitchen sinks or other kitchen appliances are not often ordered in life and the know-how of the customer is therefore limited. Customers are often unaware of how complex the purchase of household goods is and how they are used. This often leads to multiple orders, as the customer often chooses the wrong item. A company can counteract this by accommodating the customer through chats or a telephone service. In this way, ordering the wrong product can often be avoided right from the start (Hintermayer, 2019). Online retailers like Otto try to use artificial intelligence to transform customer ratings into sentences in order to improve product descriptions. (Majewsky, 2018) Customer advisory services are still an important factor in returns management these days. By offering a free service hotline or even a live chat function, customers can get answers to their questions about the product quickly and conveniently. This means that customers can be given help in choosing the product without the customer having to place a selection order and return products. These customer consultations include also FAQs, frequently asked questions about the products, contact by e-mail or using the contact form (Garnefeld, Böhm, & Feider, 2017).

In addition, the online retailer can also point out the ecological consequences of returns. Especially in today's world, where climate change and the ecological footprint of humankind are becoming more

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important. This is an effective method to avoid returns. The hotel industry has been using this type of avoidance for a long time by telling customers how much energy they consume when their laundry is changed every day. (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017)

If factors do not lead to a reduction in returns, the online retailer can also take more drastic measures by excluding frequent and permanent returners with high return rates. By analysing the shopping baskets and order history of these customers, the online retailer can filter out these types of customers. The category of shopping order must also be considered. Some customers are only permanent returnees in the category clothing and should therefore only be excluded for this category. In order to avoid bad customer ratings and criticism in the social networks, customers should first be informed of their increased return behaviour and should be encouraged to change their behaviour before the customer's account is permanently or temporarily blocked (Garnefeld, Böhm, & Feider, 2017). In 2013, Amazon blocked a lot of customer accounts which were knows for their frequent returns without prior warning with the message: "We ask for your understanding that we cannot accept any further orders from you due to the repeated exceeding of the usual household amount of returns within your customer account". (e-tailment, 2013). This has caused a lot of hype, which is why Amazon had to delete the customer blocks again after a short time. However, Amazon is not completely abandoning this method. Amazon is still sending warning emails to its customers when there is an increased amount of returns, saying that an exceptional number of products have been sent back to the retailer. The second e-mail says: "If your current returns behaviour remains as extraordinary as before, we reserve the right to close your Amazon.com account". If the returns behaviour continues to be so unusual, Amazon will block these accounts (Der Westen, 2019)

But returns can not only be avoided on the side of the customer. The online retailer himself can also optimize his delivery time, delivery quality and commissioning in order to prevent returns. Fast shipping, unbreakable packaging and a check for completeness and integrity of the products prevent the return of damaged or incomplete orders. The tracking of the packages is an important point for customers. The customer wants a transparent delivery of his order in order to be able to track the delivery status of the order himself. This way, the customer can see for himself if the goods will arrive on time. Using break-proof packaging, it can be guaranteed that the order arrives unharmed and without transport damage to the customer. Usually the customer returns the order in the same packaging in which he received it. The online retailer must provide high-quality packaging that can be sealed a second time so that the return reaches the supplier's warehouse undamaged (Bernon, Cullen, & Gorst, 2016).

Avoidance of returns after the purchase

The return prevention starts after the delivery of the shipment and aims to make the decision for the customer to return more difficult or even to lead the costumer to refrain from the return completely. A distinction is made between measures with and without compensation (Deges, Grundlagen des E-Commerce, 2019).

By a financial compensation through a price reduction, or by the non-refund of the purchase amount, the customer should refrain from the return. This requires that the return costs for the retailer are higher than the replacement of the goods. If the item is damaged, the retailer has the option to waive the returning of the product and refunding the purchase price. This way, the retailer avoids the object-related processes of returning the package (Möhring, Walsh, Schmidt, & Ulrich, 2015).

Furthermore, the retailer can offer customer discounts on the purchase price and therefore offer him a reward for not returning the items. If customers return little or nothing, they will be positively influenced by a reward. The retailer can thus help unsafe customers to weigh up their options by

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giving them an incentive to keep the product. Bonus points for the next purchase can also be used for customer loyalty based on the same principle. The online retailer Bonprix is a good example for this approach. If the customer does not return the order, a three-euro credit will be credited to the customer's account, which will then be credited with the next order. The bonus claim is deliberately linked to the individual order process. This way, the customer makes a more conscious choice of articles and avoids selection orders. (Bergen, 2016)

By providing permanent incentives in form of long-term bonus programs, the conscious ordering of articles will be encouraged, and selection orders will increasingly be avoided. Customer rewards are only considered in the return rate with little influence. At the same time, it benefits the customer relationship. Since the bonus is usually only credited after expiry of the withdrawal period and can also only be redeemed with a new order, the customer is bound to the online retailer. The same applies to benefits which are used with certain payment methods. Some companies give a discount on orders which are paid in advance. Thus, the online retailer immediately has the money belonging to him and the customer enjoys the lower price of the order (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017).

In addition to the return prevention with compensation, there is the return prevention without compensation. Here the online retailer tries to increase the time, financial and/or emotional effort of sending the returns in order to prevent the return. Online retailers, for example, do not enclose return stickers for the return of the shipment in the package. In order to receive the return label, the customer must request it via the online shop or by e-mail and then print it himself. This means an increased time expenditure for the initiation and execution of the return shipment for the customer. This way many customers refrain from the return shipment. These are the so-called "hassle costs". However, not enclosing a return receipt has only a minor influence on the return rate. Although it increases the time required to complete the return, it will hardly prevent the customer from returning his order. The customer will be disappointed by the missing service of the availability of the return sticker. A barrier to use the label in form of prior contact or authorization by the online retailer can be offered as an alternative. This way, the service agent can ask the reason for the return on the phone and possibly convince the customer of an alternative solution by offering him a discount or a bonus for not returning the goods. If the return sticker is not enclosed and the return process is complicated, the risk of customer dissatisfaction is far too high, as customers can be lost as a result (Janakiraman, Narayan, & Ordónez, 2012).

A further measure to prevent returns without compensation is the non-acceptance of the return fees. Nevertheless, for 92 percent of the customers, the return free of shipping costs is an important factor for purchasing in a certain online shop. First, the reference to not accepting the return charges can lead to customers cancelling their purchase because of this situation, or not wanting to order at all. Second, it can also lead to a more conscious purchasing behaviour with the avoidance of selection orders (Lantz & Hjort, 2013).

The table on the next page summarizes the measures which can be considered to avoid and prevent returns. The measures are assigned to the individual phases. The pre-sales phase at the beginning of the order in the selection and information search, the sales and delivery phase during the order, the delivery and the after-sales phase which takes place after delivery of the order.

TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF THE MEASURES OF PREVENT RETURNS (OWN DESIGN, BASED ON (DEGES, DAS PROBLEM HOHER RETOURENQUOTEN IM ONLINE-HANDEL, 2017))

Pre-Sales-Phase	Sales – and Delivery - Phase	After-Sales-Phase
- Detailed product description **Information on the use and correct use of the products** **High-quality visual product presentation and product presentation** **Detailed views, zoom function and 360-degree view** **Display of goods availability and delivery promise** **Customer reviews** **Augmented reality: virtual dressing rooms and avatars** **Configurator individual size determination** **Display of reasons for returns in article descriptions**	- Real time consulting via live chat - Immediate reaction in the online dialog for multiple orders - Restriction of the number of variants for ordering - Limitation of accepted payment methods - Customer sensitization: appeal for environmental protection and sustainability - Note on return shipping with costs - Quality inspection before dispatch - Picking: check for completeness and integrity of the consignment - Selection of the shipping service provider - Stable and safe packaging - Fast shipping - Delivery time window: ensuring delivery, specifying delivery time - Tracking: Shipment tracking	- Obligation to effectively declare the revocation with return form - Request return label - Credit notes, discounts, vouchers - Personal contact with frequent returnees: warning letter - Exclusion of frequent returners - Customer block in case of proven misuse of returns

1.2.2   Reactive returns management

Reactive returns management can be defined as effective and efficient processing of returns whose reshipment have already been initiated and can no longer be prevented (Schmidt, 2019).

In reactive returns management, the correct structuring and control of complex returns handling is very important. The reactive returns management is characterized by the high percentage of manual steps involved in evaluating and processing the returned goods. After the returned goods have arrived in the receiving department, they must be checked for quantity, quality and function, classified according to reusability, reprocessed, returned as re-sellable goods to the stock or the products must be forwarded to resellers, and non-sold goods should be disposed. The degree of efficiency in returns processing depends on the quantity of packages and articles, as well as on the variety of articles in the assortment and the possible degree of automation in the individual processing steps. An investment in the automation of the flow of goods is recommended if there is a high volume of returns, as is system support for the flow of information. This way, the cost-intensive part of manual work steps can be reduced. The implementation of software solutions with a module component for returns management guarantees the company a fast flow of information and prompt

processing of the data relevant to returns. The success of returns processing is demonstrated by the recycling rate. A high recycling rate also means low depreciation on the value of goods. (Vitasek, Manrodt, & Murphy, 2014)

Following, the standard processes for internal returns processing are explained in detail.

Delivery and entry of returns:

By scanning the return label, the delivered package is assigned to the original order in the warehouse. If the customer had to declare the return before the reshipment, the relevant return information can already be retrieved in the system. The return will be unpacked, and the returned items are recorded. (Weinfurtner, Zellner, & Münch, 2015)

Inspection and classification of returns:

An employee checks the goods for damage and reusability. After the goods have been inspected, a decision is made of how the product will be handled in the returns process and how the purchase price is to be refunded to the customer, depending on the classification of the product. (Weinfurtner, Zellner, & Münch, 2015)

Preparation and repackaging of the reusable items:

Products that can be reused must be reconditioned. Clothing must be cleaned, ironed and folded. Malfunctions in electronic devices can be repaired by employees in returns processing. The product must be repackaged and labelled. (Weinfurtner, Zellner, & Münch, 2015)

Storage of reusable items and release for sale:

The quick storage of reusable goods is important for the availability of goods in the forward logistics. The stock must be updated after the re-storage in the merchandise management system and the availability in the online shop. (Weinfurtner, Zellner, & Münch, 2015)

Customer communication and reimbursement of the invoice amount:

The returns processing procedure ends with a credit note or the reversal of the services already paid by the customer. For the customer, the status of the reversal is important, which is why status e-mails at the beginning and end of the returns process lead to increased customer satisfaction (Griffis, Rao, Goldsby, & Niranjan, 2011).

Marketing of returned goods
A distinction is made between four different returns after the incoming goods inspections:

A – Returns: perfect condition, direct resale
B – Returns: slight signs of usage, resale after processing
C – Returns: strong traces of usage, marketing as price-reduced used goods
D – Returns: damaged or defective, disposal or scrapping (Asdecker, Retourenmanagement im Versandhandel, 2014)

Depending on how the return was assessed and reprocessed, it can be reused and marketed. The availability in the online shop depends on the duration of the individual processing steps. Especially for seasonal articles, it is important that they are available in the online shop as quickly as possible so that they can be sold before the end of the season. In the fashion and clothing industry, the 100-day right of return that some online retailers offer can become a problem, as the articles are often returned shortly before the end of the season or after the end of the season. Even the fourteen-day

right of return can be the disadvantageous, because the articles can be available again in the assortment after 18-20 days at the earliest. (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017)

In the ideal case, the return can be offered again as new goods. This can only be done if the package has not been opened yet. If the goods are still in their original packaging, or if even small traces of use have been completely removed the goods can be offered again. As soon as the article cannot be sold as new anymore due to usage, for testing of functionality or transport damage, a loss of value occurs. The cause is either the deterioration of the condition of the article, or a fall in price during the withdrawal period. If the article has been returned due to quality defects such as material or manufacturing defects, it can also be returned to the manufacturer or supplier. (E. Sucky, 2011)

Returns that cannot be repaired or cleaned due to heavy traces of usage can only be sold as used goods with high discounts. The task of the company is to find the best marketing channel for these goods. It can be decided whether the goods are marketed by an external partner or internally. Used goods that are not marketed themselves can be sold to a buyer or reseller or resold at auction platforms. Internally, used goods can be resold by a subsidiary that specializes in secondary exploitation. Another possibility is to donate the goods via distribution channels such as a factory outlet, an outlet centres or a public PR measure. (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017)

If all this is not possible because the goods have been returned too damaged, the goods will be written off and disposed or scrapped. (Deges, Das Problem hoher Retourenquoten im Online-Handel, 2017).
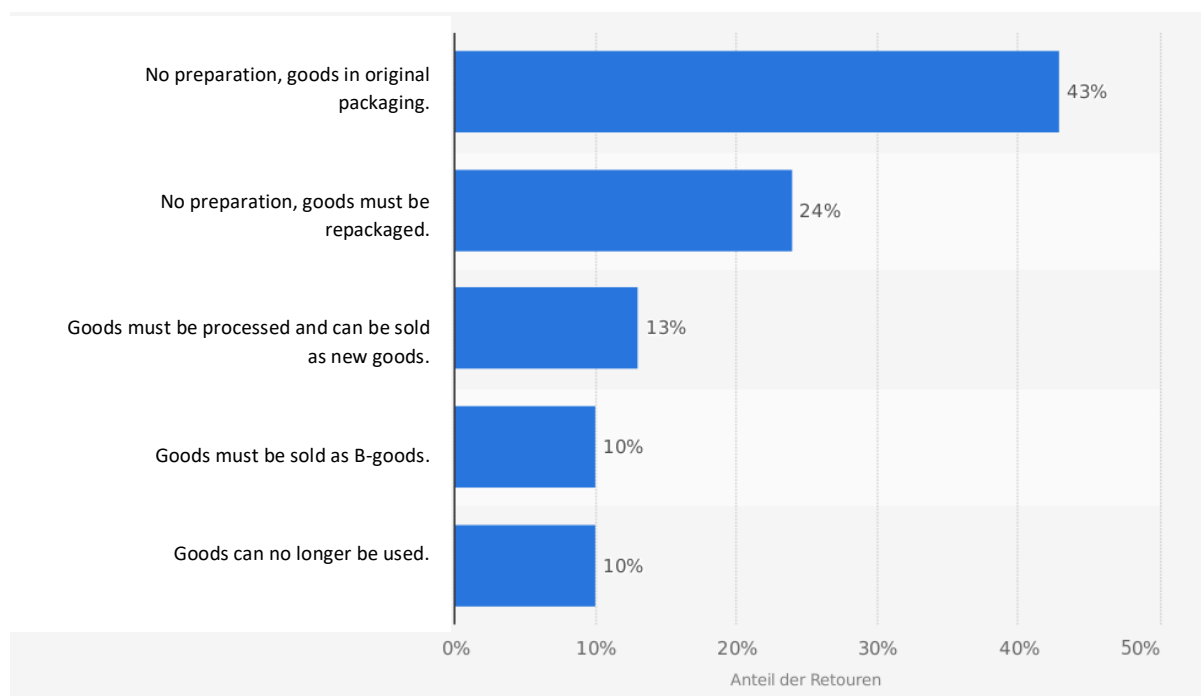
FIGURE 3 DISRUPTION OF RETURNS BY PROCESSING AND RECYCLING CATEGORIES (RESEARCH, STATISTA.DE, 2011)

The figure shown above shows the distribution of returns according to processing and recycling categories. According to online retailers, 43 percent of the returns are still in their original packaging when they are received at the incoming goods warehouse and can therefore be re-included in the assortment. In average every tenth return can no longer be reused. Also, a share of 37 percent of

the returns can be marketed again as new goods with a preparation of the articles and only ten percent must be sold as used goods. (research, statista.de, 2011)

This data can vary from one industry to another. In the fashion and clothing industry only four percent of returns can no longer be reused. (research, statista.de, 2011) Particularly with high return rates, profitability depends heavily on the possibility of reusing the returns. Fortunately, the share of directly resalable goods in the clothing and shoe industry is very high at 68.8 and 91,7 percent. For the "DIY/flowers" product group alone, resale only amounts to 39.5 percent (see Table 3). This is probably due to the fact that during assembly, the construction kits still bear recognizable traces even after processing. Regardless of whether they are new goods or not. With "DIY/ flowers" the flowers or the toolbox show clear traces after the test and test possibilities, which are entitled to the customer also according to the right of revocation. (Asdecker, Karl, & Sucky, Retourenmanagement als Erfolgsfaktor des Handels, 2017).

TABLE 3 PERCENTAGE OF RECYCLING IN RELATION TO A PRODUCT GROUP (ASDECKER, KARL, & SUCKY, RETOURENMANAGEMENT ALS ERFOLGSFAKTOR DES HANDELS, 2017)

Product Group	Resale	Recyclable	Donation	Disposal	Others
Clothing	68,8%	21,9%	0,0%	8,6%	0,8%
Hobby/ Leisure	56,1%	19,9%	2,4%	12,5%	9,1%
Consumer electronics	69,2%	23,9%	0,0%	5,0%	1,9%
DIY (Do it Yourself)/ Flowers	39,5%	10,0%	0,0%	35,2%	15,2%
Shoes	91,7%	0,0%	0,0%	6,7%	1,7%
Furniture	82,9%	0,0%	0,0%	13,2%	3,8%
Jewellery	36,1%	0,0%	5,6%	18,1%	40,3%
Household goods	74,4%	14,1%		5,4%	6,2%
Others	81,4%	0,3%	0,3%	4,3%	13,8%

1.2.3 Return costs

The direct return costs are caused due to transport and processing of the returns. In an analysis of the costs 302 mail order companies were asked in 2012, return costs were estimated at an average of 7.93 € (IfH, 2012). This is a general estimate of costs that does not consider the different product groups. In the table listed on the other site, the costs are listed in the different product groups. The transport costs of an article are particularly low for clothing or shoes. The cost of returning furniture is very high. In average 33, 40 euro per article, the online dealer must pay for each return. This can be explained by the difficult delivery of the articles. Often the articles are bulky and heavy, whereby they can no longer be supplied by a parcel service but must be dispatched by the clearly more expensive forwarding agency. (research, statista.de, 2011). The expenses are put into perspective, as the return rates for furniture are relatively low in connection with the usually very high value of goods (see Figure 4). (IfH, 2012).
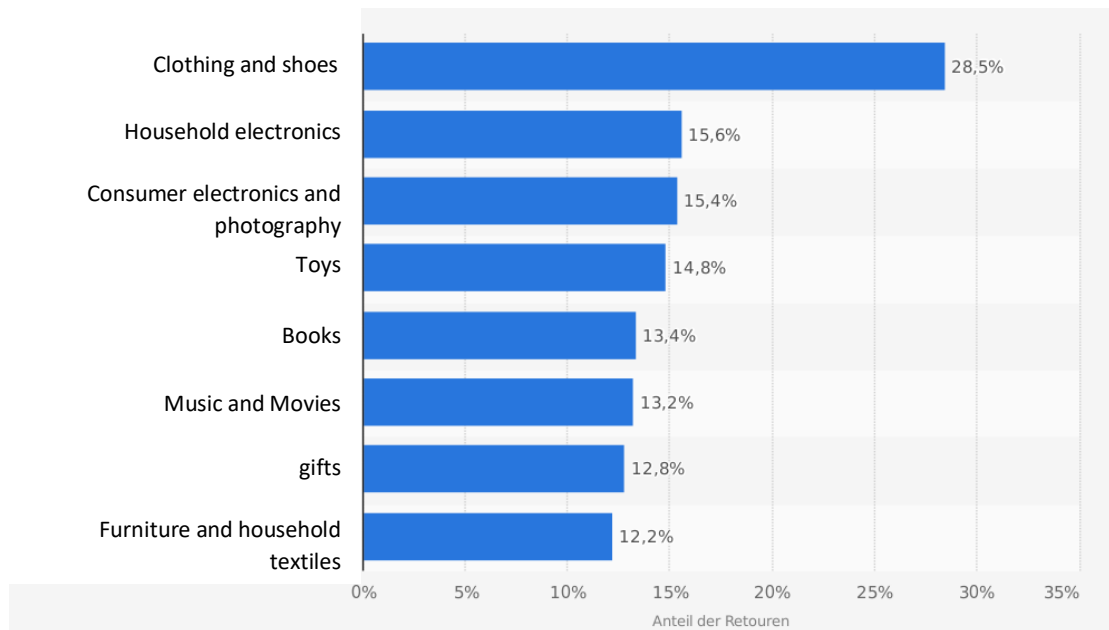
FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE OF RETURNS PER PRODUCT CATEGORY (IfH, 2012)

The level of processing costs depends on the extent to which the processes can be automized. In the fashion and clothing industry, on the contrary to entertainment electronics, this is possible. The processing of a digital camera requires a manual and labour-intensive inspection of the goods. It must be ensured that there are no test images on the memory, that the settings are reset to the factory settings and that no fingerprints are visible on the smooth surfaces of the camera. (IfH, 2012)

TABLE 4 PRODUCT GROUP-RELATED RETURN COSTS (IfH, 2012)

Product Group	Average transportation costs per item	Average processing cost per item
Clothing	2,47 Euro	1,99 Euro
Hobby/ Leisure	7,45 Euro	11,95 Euro
Consumer electronics	5,76 Euro	19,88 Euro
DIY (Do it Yourself)/ Flowers	6,48 Euro	9,25 Euro
Shoes	3,29 Euro	2,80 Euro
Furniture	33,40 Euro	14,05 Euro
Jewellery	4,88 Euro	5,61 Euro
Household goods	7,10 Euro	13,16 Euro
Others	3,67 Euro	5,62 Euro

1.3 Knowledge Gap

Through the theoretical elaboration, it becomes clear that there is already a lot of information which can be found about returns. Especially regarding the returns process and the processing and costs of returns, a lot has been investigated. It has not been investigated how the different methods of return prevention and avoidance reach the customer and leads to less returns. The study is intended to provide guidance for companies as to which methods can be used to effectively avoid returns. In addition, ideas for avoiding returns, which are listed on the next site, will be examined and their acceptance tested by the customer.

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1. Discount on the purchasing price
2. Receipt of bonuses after expiry of the withdrawal period, which may be used for the next purchase
3. A personal greeting card enclosed with the order
4. Discount by posting the online shop on social media
5. Vouchers for other online shops after the expiry of the withdrawal period
6. Discount on the order when using a certain payment method (e.g. prepayment)
7. Limitation of payment options with a high number of returns
8. Restriction of the shopping basket value for the next order
9. Free samples if return is not required
10. Lack of enclosing a return label (additional effort by contacting customer service)
11. Return costs must be paid by the customer
12. Indication of environmental damage

The aim is to examine the customer's requirements for the returns process and to what extent the customer would respond to different preferences in order to send fewer orders back. At the end, it must be clear what requirements the target group has of the online shop and what challenges the online shop faces regarding returns. Based on this information it can be analysed which measures would be effective for the target group to avoid returns before ordering and prevent them after delivering.

The knowledge gap is therefore: How do various measures avoid and prevent returns affect customers and which measures would lead to fewer returns? How can the existing measures be optimized? In order to answer these questions, a good cooperation with the German society is important, so that the requirements of the customers can become clear. In return, online retailers must be considered, as they also have an influence on the various measures.

1.4 What is being investigated?

Main Question

The following main research question has arisen through intensive literature review:

How can a company with online sales aimed at the German consumer market best prevent customers from returning items?

Sub - questions

To be able to answer the main research question in a structured way, three sub - questions were set up:

- Which functionalities of an online shop ensure that the customer can make the optimal order decision?
- What are the most important options for the customer when returning a product/service?
- What are the best measures a company can take to influence customers 'return behaviour so that customers avoid returning the ordered goods?

1.5 Objectives

The aim of the research is to find out what is most important to the customer when buying products in an online shop and why he is motivated to return or to return not his goods. Furthermore, the problems and challenges will be revealed of the company side. Often it is simply not possible for the companies to prevent returns Due to unpredictable customer behaviour. And perhaps an alternative solution cannot be found.

The expected research results will help to get a clearer picture of the customer. It is already clear, that the free return option is very important for the customer (Löhr & Schäfer, 2018). If the return should cost something, the customer weighs up whether it is worthwhile to order something in this online shop or not. The new results will be used to find out how to motivate the customer to keep the item and not send it back. In addition, it will be investigated how certain companies influence and improve their returns management. The process of returns will be discussed and how it can be improved.

Until the end of the bachelor thesis there are several goals to be achieved. These goals are listed below.

General Objective

- Analysis of various measures to avoid returns and to increase customer acceptance of the various measures

Specific Objectives:

- Analysis of the tools which are the most important for the online retailer when ordering an article.
- Investigate what customers pay attention to when buying an item.
- Determine the most frequent reasons for returns
- Determining motives for the customer which motivate the customer to keep articles and not send them back.
- Insights into the problems a company faces with returns management

Each of these specific goals leads to the following goal, once one goal has been achieved the other can be achieved. Results will be delivered from the customer's point of view as well as from the company's point of view. In order to analyse both sides, a customer survey will be conducted, and a company survey will be conducted to obtain exclusive insights into returns management. Based on the literature and the analysed results of the survey and the interview, a recommendation can be made for companies that want to optimise their returns management.

Chapter 2: Material and Method

Chapter two contains the material and methods which was used in this research. The chapter contains a detailed description of the research methodology to be applied for each sub question.

2.1 Research design

In this research a market analysis of the German return's behaviour was carried out. The analysis includes what online customers think about returns and what is important to them during their purchase at an Online-Shop. In the research, as many customers of the German society as possible were asked. The aim was to find a strategy to avoid or even prevent the high number of returns. It was important to pay attention what important is to the customers and what they would forego with certain advantages. Furthermore, the website of the Online-Shop of the interviewed company was examined more closely, to find out whether preventive returns management was applied to the website. It was analysed what the company already does on avoiding or preventing returns and what challenges the company faces in the process. Such explorative research is about developing and elaborating a theory.

Market research can be carried out with a qualitative and a quantitative method. In this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.

The analysis used a survey and an interview. The survey was an independent survey for German online customers. The questions referred to general information about returns. The numerical findings of this quantitative method were obtained from many respondents. The qualitative method took place with the help of an interview. A company was interviewed which itself struggles with high returns due to the online shop.

The quantitative research concentrated on many participants. It provided numerical results about the online customers and their return behaviour. For quantitative research, a digital survey on returns was used, which was brought to the German society via social media and other channels like E-Mail or word-to-mouth advertising. The responses were then processed by SurveyMonkey itself for subsequent analysis by the survey designer. The resulting results will be presented using percentages and numbers.

The qualitative research referred to an interview with BLANCO GmbH + Co KG about their handling regarding returns management. For the research it was important to obtain a comparative value from the point of view of a B2C online retailer. In this way, it can be seen how returns management is implemented in a company and what benefits it has. This was a personal, oral form of questioning. The results of the interview will be reproduced and processed in the form of texts.

The research took place in the last quarter of 2019. The required response to the survey and the interview took place between October and January.

2.2 Method

In order to answer the partial questions listed in chapter one, a survey and an interview were conducted. This guaranteed practical answers to the questions. The target groups of the two methods were the German society, which buys in online shops, and a company, which actively sells its goods in an online shop. In the survey, the participant was asked quantitative questions.

By using the survey, the research is quantitative. The data for the study were collected by means of a field study, a digital survey and a literature search. Mainly the background information was found based on a literature search. The associated data analysis is a descriptive statistic.

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The survey started in the beginning of December and lasted 5 weeks. The online platform "surveymonkey.de" was used to create and publish the survey. The premium version of "SurveyMonkey" offers the student a preparation of the results, whereby the results can be represented clearly by the already existing codebook of "SurveyMonkey". The results can thus be displayed in diagrams and tables to support a strategy for avoiding returns. The survey was distributed via LinkedIn and Facebook. The required number of respondents were reached by passing on the message. A total of 384 respondents are needed; this is calculated with a 95% confidence level and an error rate of 5% (SurveyMonkey, 2019).

Only fully completed surveys were included in the survey. In addition, the surveys were only carried out among German citizens. Gender and place of residence have no influence on the study and thus participants of all sexes and all areas of life participated in the study. One of the criteria was that the participants had to be 16 years or older to participate in the study. Incorrectly completed surveys with, for example, several answers per question were not included in the study. At the beginning of the survey it was pointed out that they can win a Zalando voucher worth € 20 by participating in the survey. At the end, the participants were asked again whether they would like to take part in the competition for this voucher. This should motivate the participant to take part in the competition (Gansser & Zimmermann, 2017).

The survey was used to get to know German online customers better. The aim of the survey was to obtain general information about the customer between, information about the buying behaviour as well as the return behaviour. In addition, the customer's expectations of an online shop were asked. In the survey, customers were asked quantitative questions. General questions were asked about their buying behaviour, such as the number of online purchases per month, or the number of items per purchase. In addition, questions were asked about return behaviour. These were questions such as how often a customer returns the goods, orders selection orders, or what are the reasons for a return. Participants were people living in Germany. In order to get in contact with the participants, various social media channels were used to generate a large number of participants as possible. At the beginning of the survey it was pointed out that they can win a Zalando voucher worth € 20 by participating in the survey. At the end, the participants were asked again whether they would like to take part in the competition for this voucher. This should motivate the participant to take part in the competition.

The used number of participants could just be reached. It was difficult to find the high number of respondents for the survey. Through various Facebook portals and other social media channels, enough respondents could be found step by step. Right from the start there was not enough time to answer the survey. 386 participants took part in the survey. The confidence level is very high with regard to the answers to the questions. A confidence level of 95 % can be expected. Due to the recurring open questions, it was possible to check whether the respondent was taking part attentively in the survey or not. The survey was completely processed and filled out by 100 percent of the participants. All questions had to be answered obligatory, so that all questions were answered successfully. After the survey, the prize draw was held, and a winner was found.

Qualitative research methods are often applied in market research in addition to quantitative research. Since qualitative research uses an explorative question where the answers are open and not given, it is often used as an addition to quantitative research to deepen its results. Data can be collected in writing, by telephone, via the Internet or in person on site. In this study, the interview took place personally in a one-on-one interview. In order for the study to make sense, the results must be fully documented, which is why a report of the interview was prepared. The report should help to connect the research question with the results in an understandable way. The qualitative

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research enables a transparent data collection, which is life- and practice orientated. Instead of just figures, these research methods uncover the background to decisions, behaviour or motives. The interviewee presented his or her own subjective view without being restricted by ready-made answers (Gansser & Zimmermann, 2017).

The interview took place with the previous company BLANCO GmbH + Co KG (BLANCO) of the practical semester of the student. BLANCO, located in Oberderdingen (Baden-Württemberg), is one of the leading manufacturers of high-quality sinks and kitchen fittings. The largest German sink manufacturer and specialist for water in the kitchen has also been a leader in the kitchen faucet product area in Germany for many years (Hintermayer, 2019). In order to keep up with competitors such as Villeroy, FRANKE, Bosch or WMF, BLANCO has its own online shop where private customers can purchase sinks, water taps, wastewater systems and spare parts. In today's age of digitalisation, an online shop is indispensable for a company that aims to establish business relationships with private customers (B2C) in addition to business relationships with other companies (B2B). Since the company has to struggle with the return of pallet goods on a daily basis (Hintermayer, 2019), the return management team of BLANCO is to be interviewed in the logistics centre. General information about the returns process from incoming goods to the processing stage were asked as well as questions about how returns are avoided in the company or which challenges are encountered in returns management. In addition, specific questions were asked about BLANCO's customers, whether they are more private customers returning the previously ordered goods or wholesalers. The interview with BLANCO offers research great added value because it provides a comparative value to the information from the survey. The survey only questions the customers' return behaviour and how they perceive their own return behaviour. The aim is to find out how a company with an active online shop deals with incoming returns and how the company may manipulate the buying and returning behaviour of its customers. Interviews offer the advantage that the interviewer can dig deeper into unclear issues and thus an open discussion can be created in which new ideas and ways of thinking can develop (Ullrich, 2019).

On the basis of the information gained from the interview, the BLANCO online shop then needed to be examined with the interviewee in order to be able to trace the return behaviour of the customers with regard to the factor of user-friendliness of online shops.

The interview was conducted as planned. Right from the start, a relaxed and open atmosphere could be created, resulting in an interesting and informative interview. The interviewee tried to give as precise answers as possible. However, it was sometimes not possible to reproduce certain facts and numbers, as the BLANCO company otherwise runs the risk of being less competitive. Nevertheless, many exciting insights into the returns management of a company were gained. The different methods for the avoidance of returns could be summarised and the problems with which an online shop has to struggle could be examined in more detail. It was also interesting to see what additional problems arise with a product like the BLANCO sink.

2.2.1 Sub questions

1. Which functionalities of an online shop ensure that the customer can make the optimal order decision?

In order to be able to answer this partial question, the participant was asked four general questions concerning their ordering behaviour. All questions can be found in Appendix 3 "Survey questions English". Once the gender and age information had been asked, the participant was asked general questions about the ordering behaviour, such as the frequency of orders and which product group he orders the most. The participants were also asked questions about the functionalities of online

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shops. The aim here was to question what is particularly important to the participants during their ordering experience. For this purpose, the participants could select the options that apply to them from a variety of different options concerning the functionalities of an online shop. Furthermore, twelve different criteria were presented to them, with which they could select how important these criteria are to them. The criteria mentioned were criteria such as the offer of an app or the professional design of the website. The scale goes from very important, over rather important, rather unimportant to unimportant. In addition, a literature review was carried out, to identify and critically evaluate, on the basis of scientific articles, which measures might be important for the respondent.

2. What are the most important options for the customer when returning a product/service?

Various methods were developed and interrogated for this question. The issue of this sub question is which of the methods best would motivate the customer not to return the goods. Twelve different methods were presented to the participant, which could possibly lead to the return being waived. For each method, the participants were asked how likely it is that they would not return the goods. One of the twelve questions was whether it would motivate the participants not to send the goods back if they had to pay the return fees themselves. However, it became clear from the study that free shipping and thus free return shipping is very important for customers (Bergmann, 2019). It was interesting to see whether free shipping and return really is one of the most important demands of customers. Therefore, additional questions were asked whether the participants would buy at all in an online shop if they had to pay the return costs themselves. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to contribute their own ideas regarding new methods of avoiding returns.

3. What are the best measures a company can take to influence customers 'return behaviour so that customers avoid returning the ordered goods?

To answer this question, specific questions were addressed to the head of quality assurance and returns at the logistics centre of BLANCO GmbH + Co KG. It is important in an interview how the questions are asked and that there is a common thread (Ullrich, 2019). In order to create a relaxed atmosphere, a general question about returns was asked at the beginning of the interview. The first question was whether and how the process from receiving the return to processing and reselling is different from the usual process. Afterwards, more and more attention was paid to the company itself. Questions about recyclability and the costs of returns processing had to be asked. Here it should be noted that the company may not want to disclose this and will only give rough values. In addition, it was asked how the company tries to avoid returns and which problems the company must deal with regarding returns. In order to answer the partial question even better, the provisional results of the survey were also included in the answer, as the participants of the survey were also asked questions about their opinion about the measures of the online retailers taken to avoid returns. These questions were mainly about possible measures that would motivate the participants as customers not to return their purchased products.

2.3 Material

The mentioned survey was distributed to the target group. Before the survey was online, the questions were tested for interpretation so that the results of the survey could not be influenced by an incorrectly interpreted question. The purpose of the survey was described before in section 2.2.1. The aim of the survey was to obtain information on customer expectations regarding the online shop and information on returns behaviour. The reliability of the research was ensured by many participants. This allowed creating a clear picture of the respondents.

The same applies to the interview. The questions of the interview were worked out in advance and checked for clarity in order to not waste valuable time. The topic was clearly limited in advance in order to receive only the relevant information. The interview was scheduled for two hours to discuss the full complexity of returns management. The interviewer was responsible for establishing a pleasant conversation situation; a little small talk at the beginning of the interview loosened up the conversation and created a positive initial situation. At the beginning a quite simple question was asked and then the conversation increased in complexity. An attentive and positive attitude was important, so the interviewee was willing to respond to the questions.

In addition to the survey and the interview, various literature sources were used, such as chapters from books, specialist journals, research papers or textbooks.

Chapter 3: Results

Now that general information on the subject has been collected and the materials and methods have been described in detail, this chapter discusses the results of the survey and the interview. The processed data of the quantitative and qualitative method are presented using texts, figures and diagrams. The survey took place in Germany. However, the original survey and the preparation for the interview can be found in the appendix in German and English.

3.1 Results of the survey to the online customer

The aim of the questions from the survey to the online customer was to examine the return behaviour of the customers regarding orders in the online trade. It was important to find out what the customer's online shopping needs were and what would motivate the customer to refrain from returning goods.

General information about the respondents

The survey was spread throughout Germany between December and January via social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Xing in order to generate as many participants as possible. The survey was conducted by a total of 386 respondents. Of the 386 respondents, more than two thirds (72,02%) were women and one third men. Most of the respondents were between 18 and 35 years old (90, 42%), with half of the respondents even between 18 and 25 years old (53,11%). However, the older age groups were also represented up to 65 years, which guaranteed a variety of answers to the questions.

Sub-question 1: Which functionalities of an online shop ensure that the customer can make the optimal order decision?

First, it was important to find out what the online behaviour of each respondent was like. It was interesting to see that every single survey participant had already ordered from an online store. 131 respondent's, orders products or services either once or twice a month (33.94 %) and even 132 respondents several times a month (34.20 %). 114 respondents ordered products in an online shop at most once a month (29.53 %) and only nine respondents order weekly or even daily.

In figure 5 the most popular product group among the respondents was clothing and shoes. 274 respondents (70.98 %) stated that the most popular product to order online are clothes and shoes. The second most frequent order were gifts. 109 respondents (52.85 %) had this product group in first, second or third place. "Consumer electronics and photos" are also ordered very frequently. 93 respondents (24.09 %) had this product group in third place. After electronics and clothing, household electronics and books are also very popular products for online orders. Around 206 of the respondents saw these products in fourth to seventh place. Music and films, on the other hand, are less popular and toys also seem to be bought more in stationary shops. At the end of the most frequent orders, the product group furniture and home textiles are ranked. Together with toys, they account for approximately 30 percent, about 120 respondents, of the product groups that are ordered the least online.

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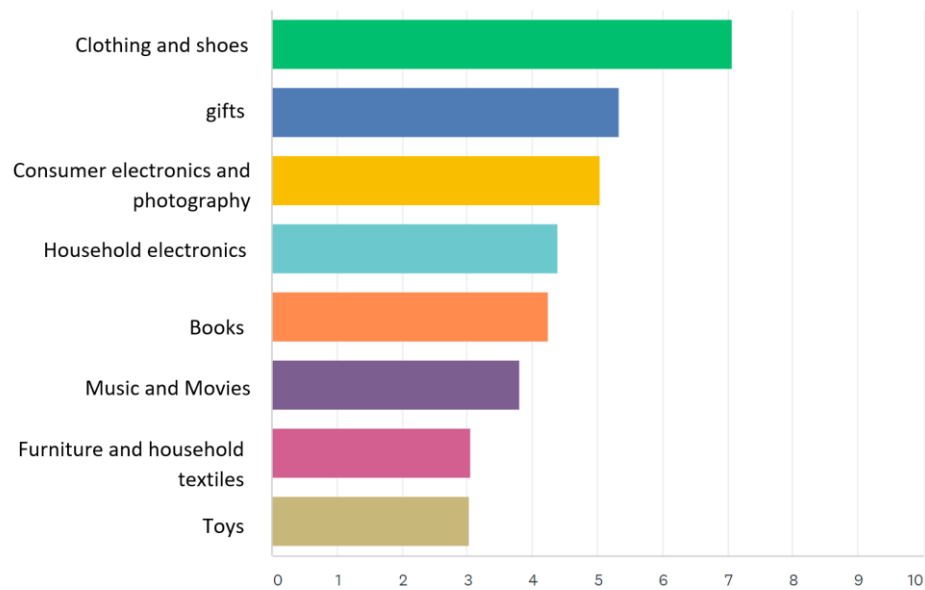
FIGURE 5 MOST POPULAR PRODUCT GROUPS

The average number of orders is two to three articles for more than 200 respondents (53.37 %). Only 72 respondents (18.65 %) buy four to five orders and only 34 respondents order six or more items. 74 respondents (19.17 %) of the respondents even buy only one article per order.

When asked about multiple orders, more than 200 respondents (53,11 %) of respondents said they buy more than one size/type of item. Other 27 respondents said they would only do so if it was for an upcoming date, which is very important, or if the size description was not accurate enough. 154 respondents (39,90 %) do not place multiple orders (see figure 6).

FIGURE 6 PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR WITH MULTIPLE ORDERS

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Requirements for the online shop

Another important question that had to be answered was which requirements the respondents expected. In figure 7 it is clear to see that a clear website is cr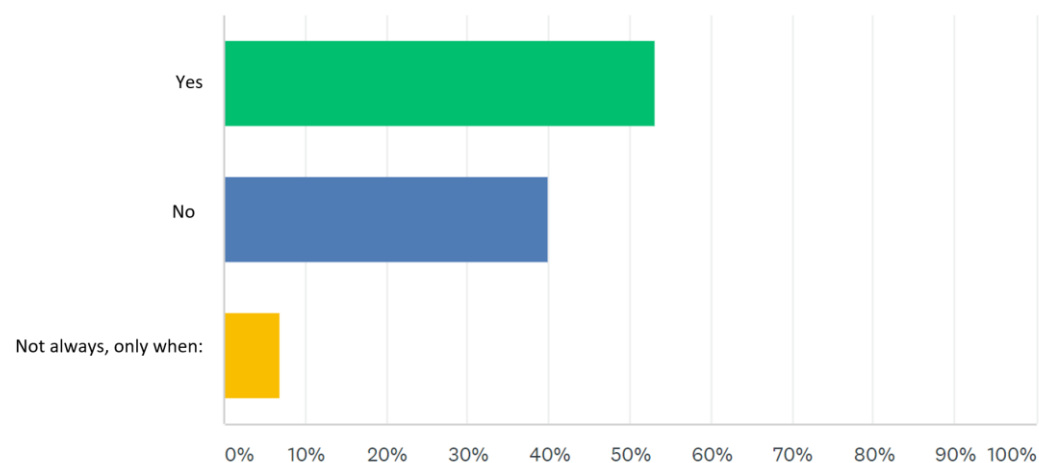ucial for the success of a website. Over 346 respondents (89.64 %) found that this is an important part of an online shop. But almost as important for the respondents was the free shipping of the articles. 296 respondents (76.68 %) also consider this to be very important. Customer evaluations and detailed descriptions of the articles were also an important part of an online shop for about 271 respondents (70.21 %). Also important is the zoom function of the photo for the respondent. About 180 respondents (46.63 %) found this to be very important for the online shop. Less important to the respondents was a right of withdrawal of more than fourteen days and the size details of the model. These were only for 149 respondent (38.60 %) or rather 129 respondents (33.42 %). A size chart was important for very few respondents. Only 127 respondents (32.90 %) considered this important. Five of the respondents also stated under "Other" that a selection of payment methods is important to them.
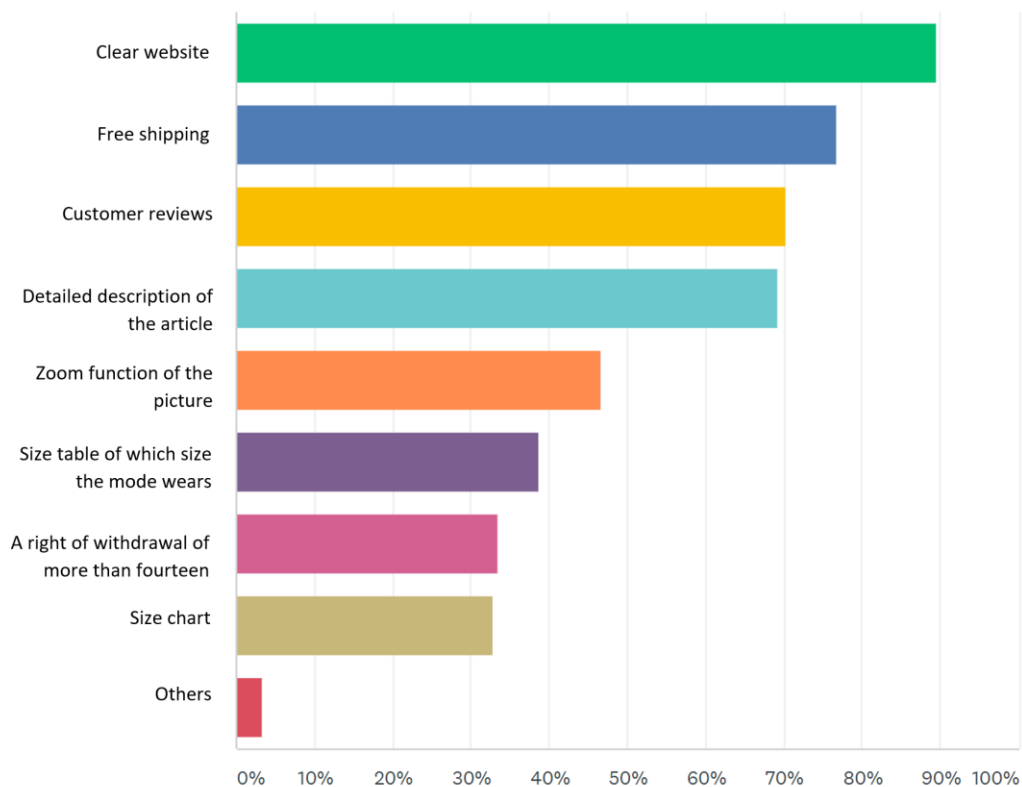
FIGURE 7 REQUIREMENTS OF THE RESPONDENTS

In the next question, respondents could choose how important different criteria are to them when using an online shop. The first criteria, the availability of an app, was important to only 46 respondents (11.92 %). 212 respondents (55.18 %) found this tool only "rather important" or were neutral towards an app. 127 respondents (32.90 %) even found the offer of an app "rather unimportant" or "very unimportant"(see figure 8). The respondents also found the integration of social media "rather unimportant". Only 34 respondents (8.81 %) found this "rather important", 155 respondents (40.16 %) "rather unimportant" and 106 respondents (27.46 %) even "very unimportant".

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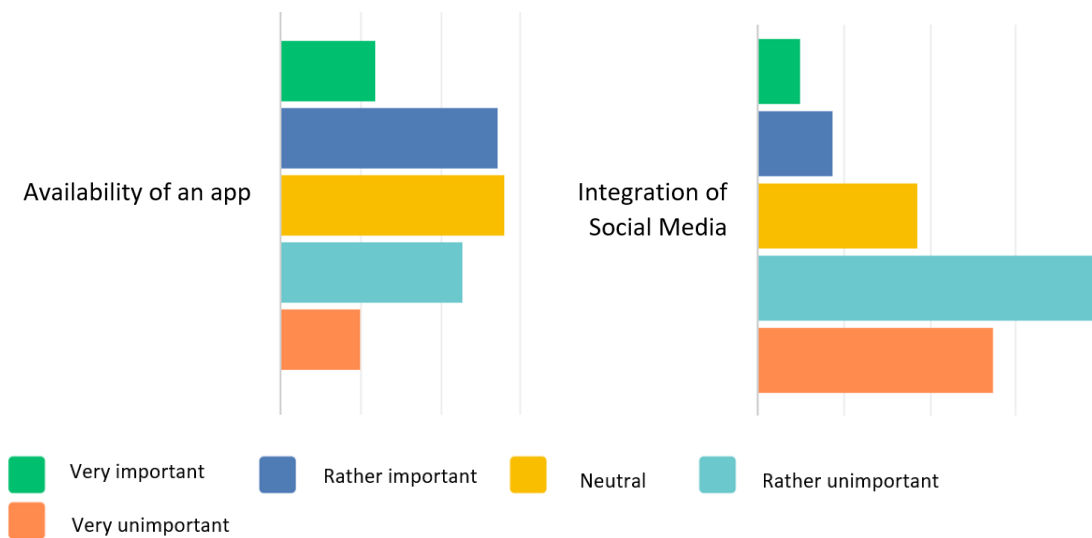
FIGURE 8 IMPORTANCE OF "AVAILABILITY OF AN APP" AND "INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA"

On the other hand, the respondents had a different opinion about the information on shipping conditions (see figure 9). About 230 respondents (59,59 %) find this "very important", 105respondents (27.20 %) "rather important". Only 6 of respondents found this "rather unimportant". The optimized presentation on mobile devices was also "rather important" for the respondents. 155 respondents (40.16 %) found this "rather important", 137 respondents (35.49 %) even "very important". Only 30 respondents and respectively 10 respondents found an optimized presentation "rather unimportant" or even "very unimportant".
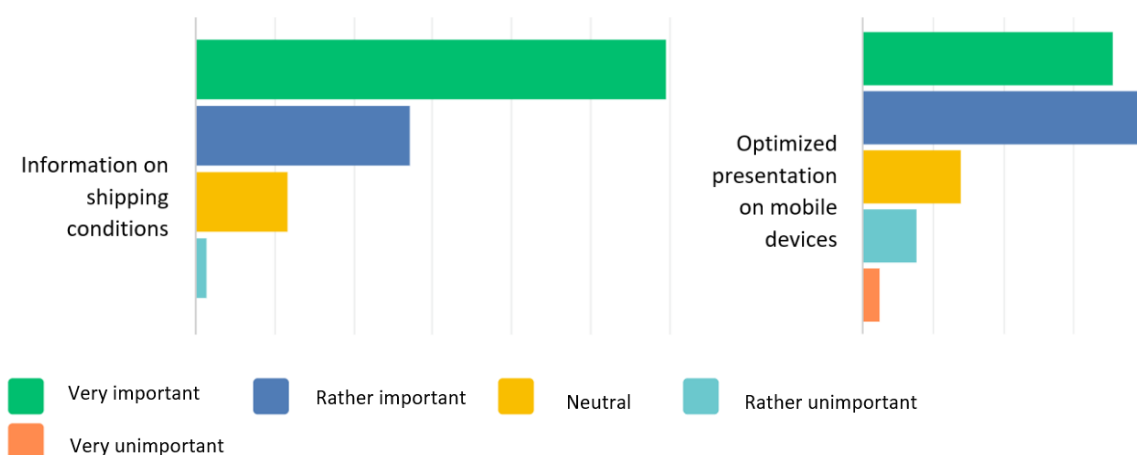
FIGURE 9 IMPORTANCE OF "INFORMATION ON SHIPPING CONDITIONS" AND "OPTIMIZED PRESENTATION ON MOBILE DEVICES"

Approximately the same result came out also with the product evaluations/ - recommendations of other customers (figure 10). 159, or 157 respondents (40.67 %/ 41.19 %) found this "rather

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important" and even "very important". Only 9 respondents found this "rather unimportant", the rest of the respondents, 59, were "neutral" towards it. Most respondents were also "neutral" towards product category pages or topic pages. About 149 respondents (38.60 %) rated this as "neutral", but the majority also fluctuated to "rather important" with 134 respondents (34.72 %). 65 respondents (16.84 %) even found it "very important" and only 36 respondents found this criteria "rather unimportant".
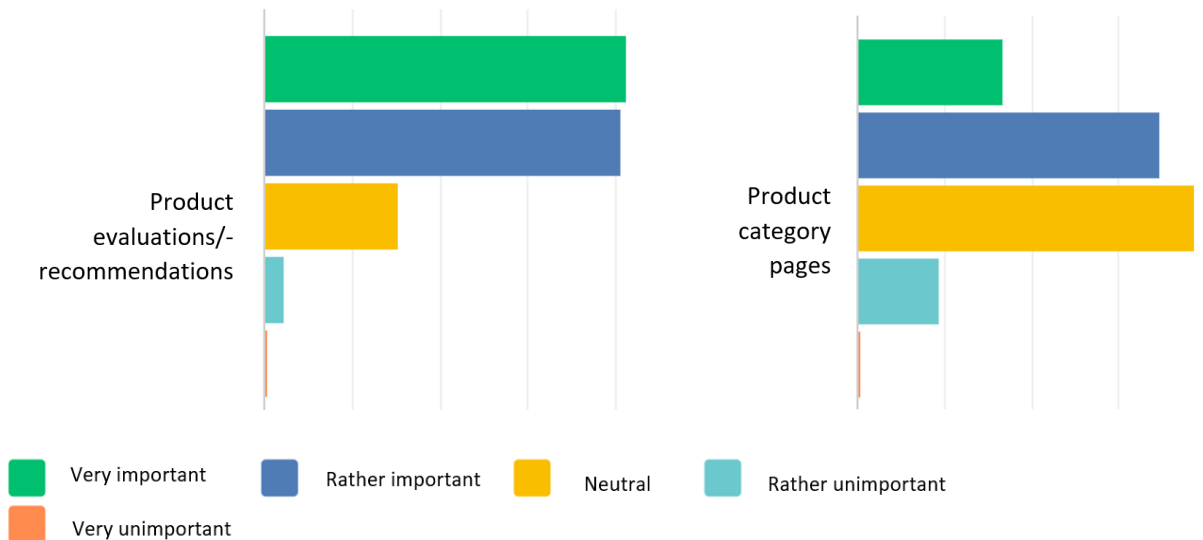
FIGURE 10 IMPORTANCE OF "PRODUCT EVALUATIONS "AND "PRODUCT CATEGORY'S"

Apart from that, a professional design of the website was important to the respondents. 147 respondents (38.08 %) found this "very important" and 182 respondents (47.15 %) "rather important". Only 46 respondents (11.92 %) were "neutral" and 9 respondents found this criteria "rather unimportant" (see figure 11).
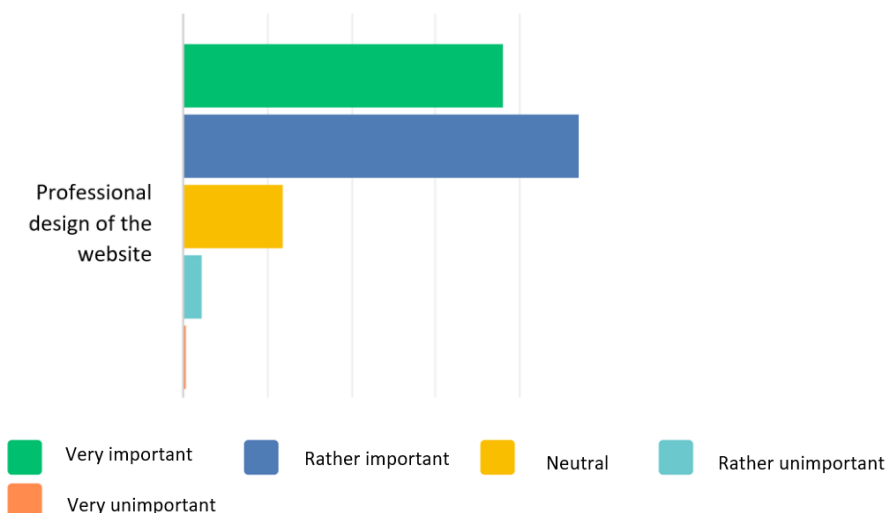
FIGURE 11 IMPORTANCE OF " PROFESSIONAL DESIGN OF THE WEBSITE"

Very important, or rather important, was a clear homepage for the respondents, which can be seen in figure 12. 143 respondents (37.05 %) thought this was "rather important" and more than 200

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respondents (53.89 %) thought it was "very important". Only 12 respondents felt this was "rather unimportant". The results for the criterion "Selection of several payment methods" were almost even clearer. 88 respondents (22.80 %) consider this to be "rather important", but about 281 respondents (72.80 %) even consider it to be "very important". Only fourteen respondents found this criterion to be "rather unimportant" or "neutral".
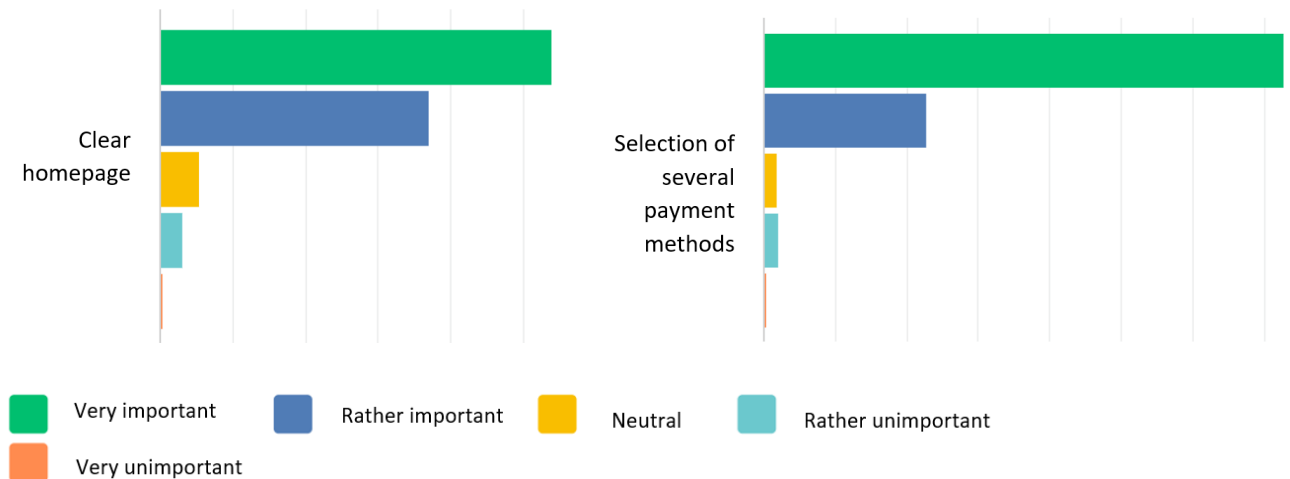
FIGURE 12 IMPORTANCE OF "CLEAR HOMEPAGE" AND "SELECTION OF SEVERAL PAYMENT METHODS"

The results for appealing product presentations and product descriptions were also positive. 153 respondents (39.74%), respectively 121 respondents (31.59 %) consider this to be "rather important". 206, respectively 245 respondents (53.51 %/ 63.97 %) even consider it to be "very important". Only a few respondents felt this to be "unimportant" (see figure 13).
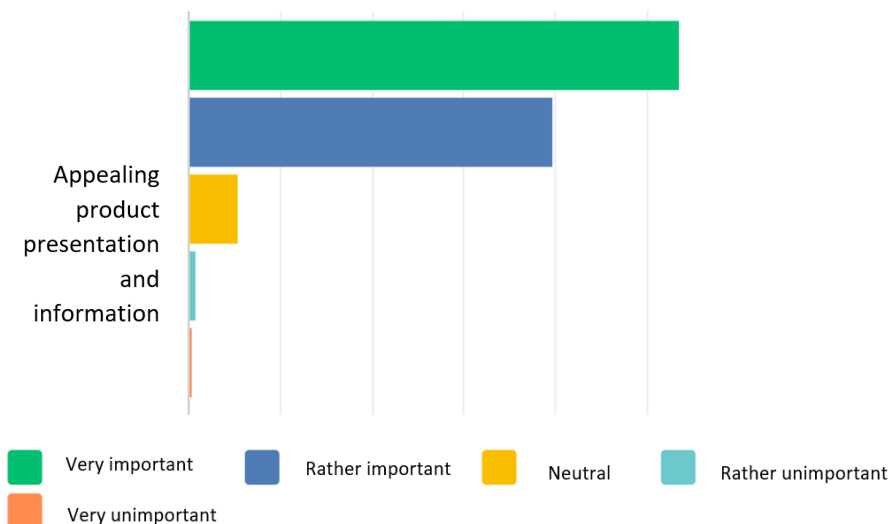
FIGURE 13 IMPORTANCE OF "APPEALING PRODUCT PRESENTATION AND INFORMATION"

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The next criteria given was further product information. Here, also 187 respondents (48.57 %) agreed that this criterion is "rather important". About 76 respondents (19.74 %) even found it to be "very important" and only 98 respondents (25.45 %) were neutral about the criterion (see figure 14).
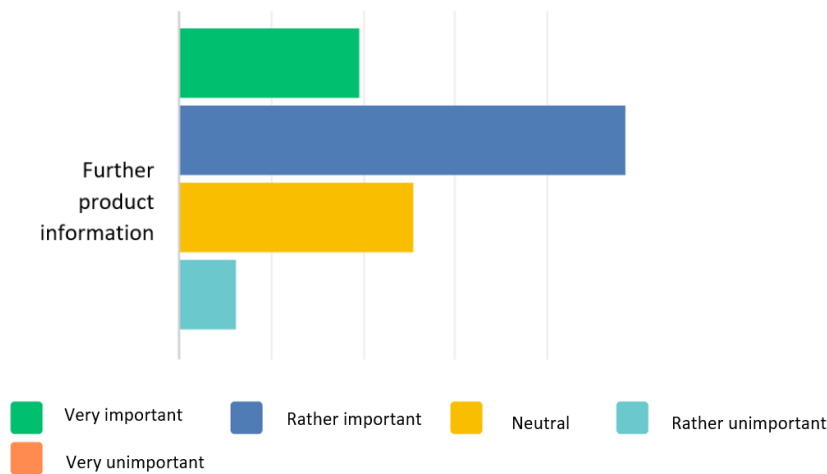
FIGURE 14 IMPORTANCE OF "FURTHER PRODUCT INFORMATION"

Sub-question 2: What are the most important options for the customer when returning a product/service?

After a general survey of the participants about their ordering behaviour, the respondents were also asked questions about their return behaviour. In response to the first question as to whether they had ever returned an order, about 375 respondents answered "yes". Only eleven of the 386 respondents answered no to this question.

In the next question, a further differentiation was made as to how much of the orders were sent back on average. The results of this question can be seen in figure 15. 198 respondents (51.30 %) send only ten to twenty percent of the orders back. 102 respondents (26.42 %) even sent 30 to 40 percent. However, only a small group of respondents, about 72, (18,66 percent) send back 50 percent or more of their orders.
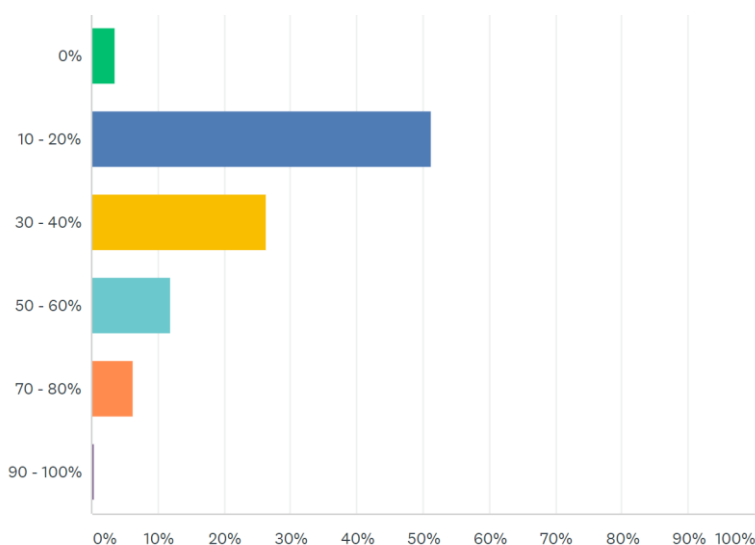
FIGURE 15 HOW MANY ORDERS ARE RETURNED BY THE RESPONDENTS

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The reasons for the return are very broad (figure 16). Most orders are returned because they do not fit (93.01 %). Over 50 percent of these types of returns are due to clothing, but it is important to note that it is not only the size of clothes or shoes that is asked for. This criterion can also apply to household devices or furniture. For example, the window curtain can be too long, or the kitchen sink is too large for the kitchen unit. 359 respondents selected this reason. Between 140 and 190 of respondents said they were returning an item because the product looked different than in the online shop, the product was defective, the product was purchased incorrectly and even because the processing of the product was not good enough. Only 49 respondents said they returned a product because they found a better offer (12.69 %), or because they just wanted to look at it once (25 respondents).
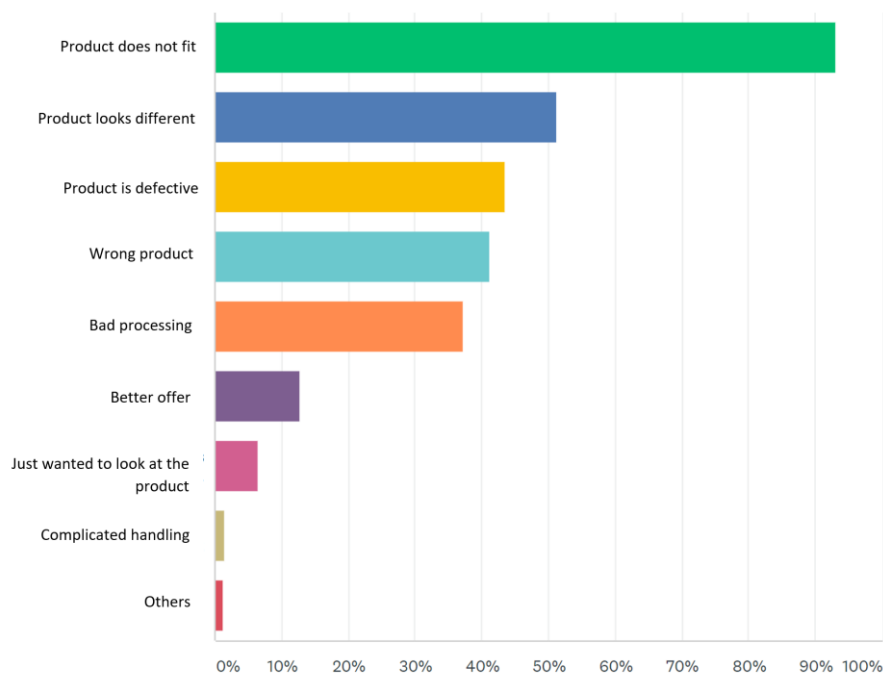
FIGURE 16 REASONS FOR THE RETURN

Due to the many returns, the question was also raised as to how much returned goods would be destroyed. About 196 respondents (50.78 %) think that more than ten percent of the goods are destroyed, but still return the goods. In each case, 55 or 59 of respondents believe that a maximum of five percent of returns are destroyed, or that no returns at all are destroyed (see figure 17).

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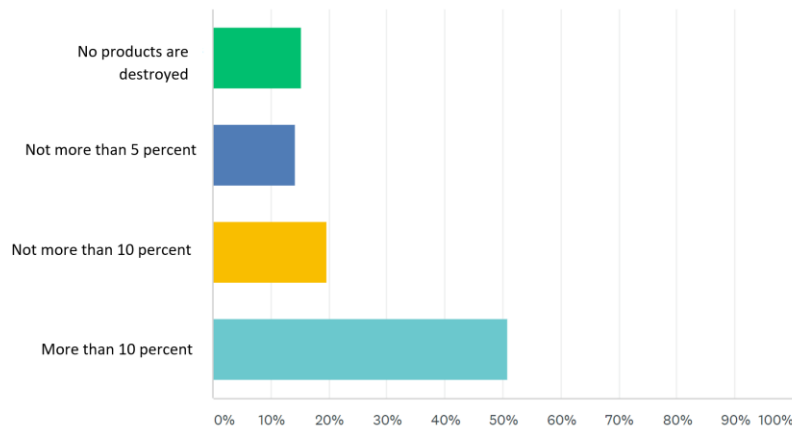
FIGURE 17 RESPONDENTS THOUGHTS ON HOW MANY RETURNED GOODS WOULD BE DESTROYED

One of the most important questions of the survey was which criteria would motivate the respondent not to return the ordered item. It was interesting to see that many of the points mentioned generally had little impact on the respondent's return behaviour.

Only 72 (18.75 %) of the respondents answered that it would be rather motivating for them, if there was no return label included in the package and only 50 respondents (13.02 %) answered with a clear "yes". More than 130 respondents (34.38 %) answered, "rather no" instead, 130 respondents (33.85 %) even answered with a clear "no". The question was also answered with "no" regarding a discount if the customer makes a posting about the online shop on social media. It would only motivate about 71 of the respondents (18.49 %) not to send the article back. 123 and 190 of the respondents (32.03 %/ 49.48 %) would rather not or not be motivated to keep the item (see figure 18).
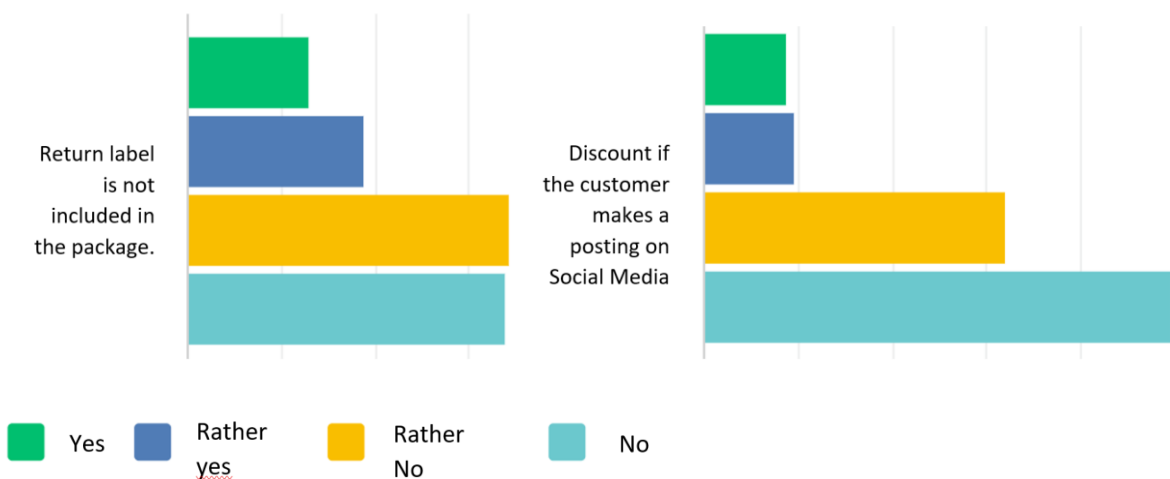
FIGURE 18 MOTIVATION OF THE RESPONDENT ON "RETURN LABEL IS NOT INCLUDED" AND "DISCOUNT IF THE CUSTOMER MAKES A POSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA"

Also, enclosing a personal greeting card with the customer does not motivate most respondents to keep the item. Only 43 of the respondents (11.17 %) answered this question with "rather yes", 129 respondents (33.51 %) with "rather no" and even 205 of the respondents (53.25 %) with "no"(see figure 19).

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Yes | Rather yes | Rather No | No
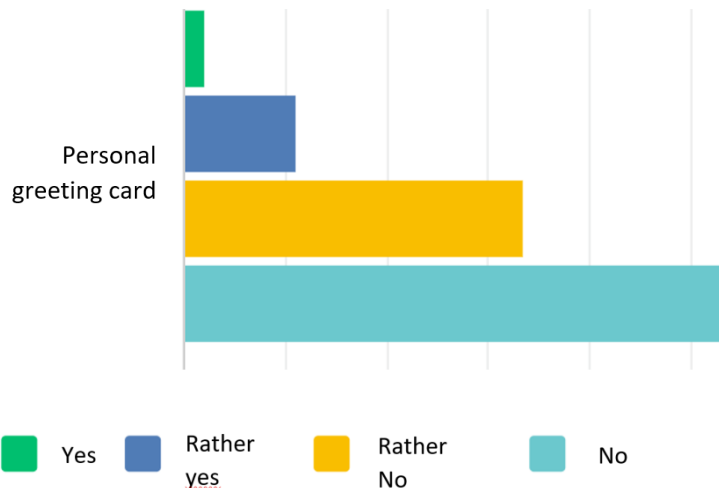
FIGURE 19 MOTIVATION OF THE RESPONDENT ON "PERSONAL GREETING CARD"

The respondents were divided when it came to receiving bonuses at the end of the withdrawal period, which can be seen in figure 20. Here 123 of the respondents (31.87 %) of the asked ones answered the question with "rather yes" and about 65 respondents (16.84 %) percent with "yes". However, also 144 of the respondents (37.31 %) answered the question with "rather no" and 54 respondents (13.99 %) with "no". The answers were similar when asking about the opinion about a discount when using a particular payment method. About 127 respondents (32.90 %) answered this question with "rather yes", 68 respondents (17.62 %) with "yes". But 109 and 82 of the respondents (28.24 %/ 21.24 %), respectively, applied for the question to be "rather no" and "no".

Yes | Rather yes | Rather No | No
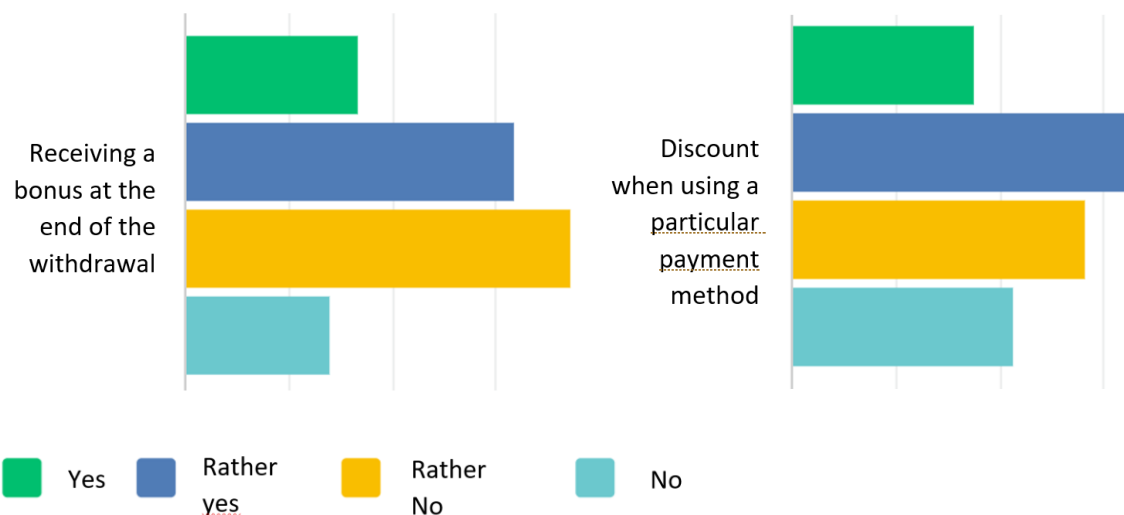
FIGURE 20 MOTIVATION OF THE RESPONDENT ON "RECEIVING A BONUS AT THE END OF THE WITHDRAWAL" AND "DISCOUNT WHEN USING A PARTICULAR PAYMENT METHOD"

Figure 21 shows, that vouchers for other online shops after the expiry of the withdrawal period and the restriction of payment options with a high number of returns are less attractive. Only 33 respondents found this attractive. 85 respondents (22.02 %) could only partially agree to this criterion. More than 135 respondents (36.01 %) would "rather not" be motivated by this criterion and also 129 respondents (33.42 %) would "not" be at all interested. The respondents were also rather positive on another criterion. 69 respondents (17.88 %) would be motivated not to return the goods if they would receive a sample article. And 132 of the respondents (34.20 %) would also tend

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to not return the goods when receiving a sample article instead. About 185 respondents (47.93 %) would also forego the sample article in order to return the order.
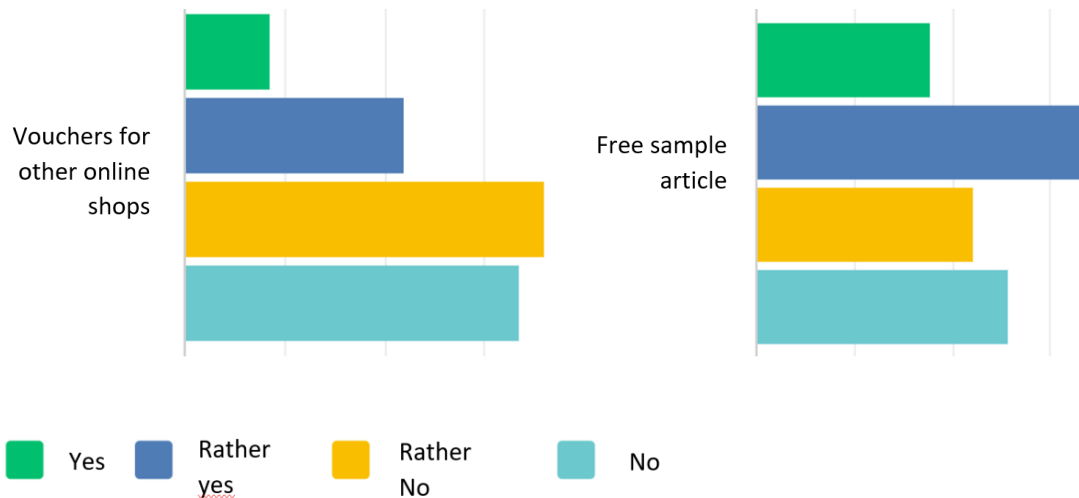
FIGURE 21 MOTIVATION OF THE RESPONDENT ON "VOUCHERS FOR OTHER ONLINE SHOPS" AND "FREE SAMPLE ARTICLE"

The result was similar for a reference of environmental damage (see figure 22). About 148 respondents (38.34 %) would "rather not" return the goods, 57 respondents would do without the return. But it would probably not prevent 101 respondents (26.17 %) from returning and 80 respondents (20.73 %) would not stop returning at all. As a final criterion, respondents were given the option of a discount of the purchase price, when waiving the return. Here 167 respondents (43.60 %) would rather do without the return, and 107 respondents (27.94 %) are sure that they would not return their order. Only 77 respondents would not motivate this, and 32 respondents would be not motivated at all.

FIGURE 22 MOTIVATION OF THE RESPONDENT ON "REFERENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE" AND "DISCOUNT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE"

In figure 23, about 260 respondents (66.59 %) would (rather) not return an item if return fees were charged. Only 70 of the respondents (18.13 %) answered this question with "rather no" and 59 respondents (15.28 %) with "no". In the last question, it could be seen that restrictions on the order process would not prevent the customer from returning the item anyway. 117 of the respondents

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(30.31 %) answered the question with "rather no" and even 137 respondents (35.49 %) with "no". Only 43 of the respondents would be motivated to not return the order, 89 respondents (23.06 %) would rather be motivated.

Charging of return fees

Restriction on the order process if there are too many returns

Yes — Rather yes — Rather No — No
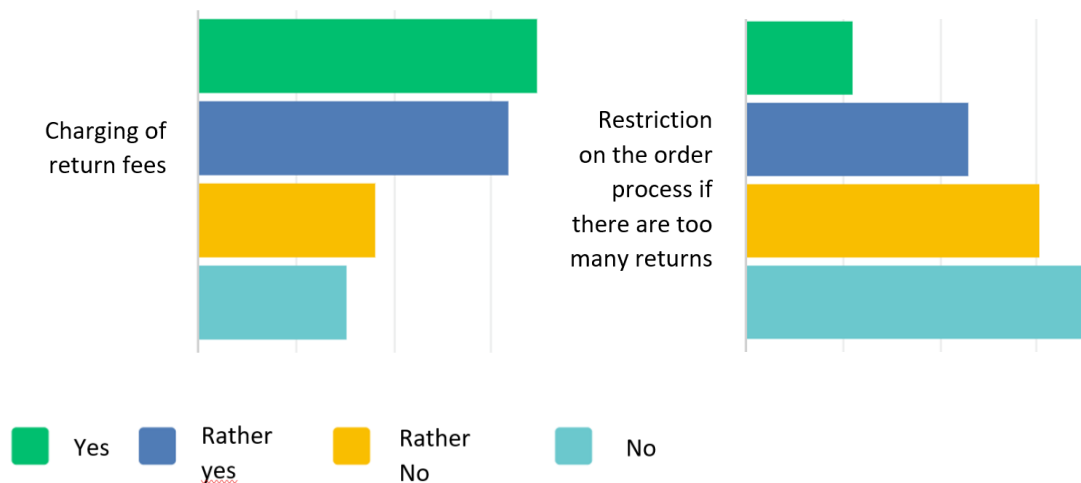
FIGURE 23 MOTIVATION OF THE RESPONDENT ON "CHARGING OF RETURN FEES" AND "RESTRICTION ON THE ORDER PROCESS"

On the contrary, 129 of the respondents (33.42 %) would consider purchasing another product from this online shop after difficulties with the return (see figure 24). In fact, 223 respondents, about 57.77 %, would no longer buy at this online shop at all.
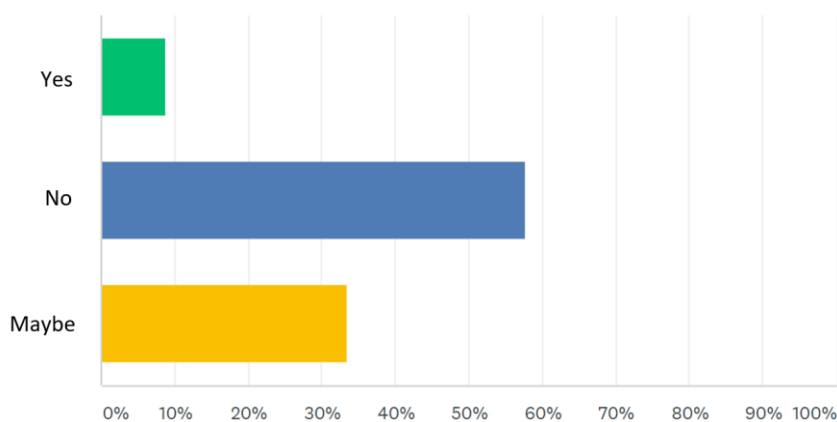
FIGURE 24 PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR AFTER DIFFICULTIES WITH THE RETURN

In the previous question (figure 23), many respondents stated that they would not send the order back if this meant paying the return costs themselves. Therefore, the question was asked whether the respondents would buy at an online shop at all if they had to pay the return costs themselves. The results of this questions can be seen in figure 25. About 198 respondents (51.30 %) said they would not make a purchase if they had to pay the return costs themselves. Only 103 of the respondents (26.68 %) stated that they would still shop in this online shop, while the other respondents were undecided.
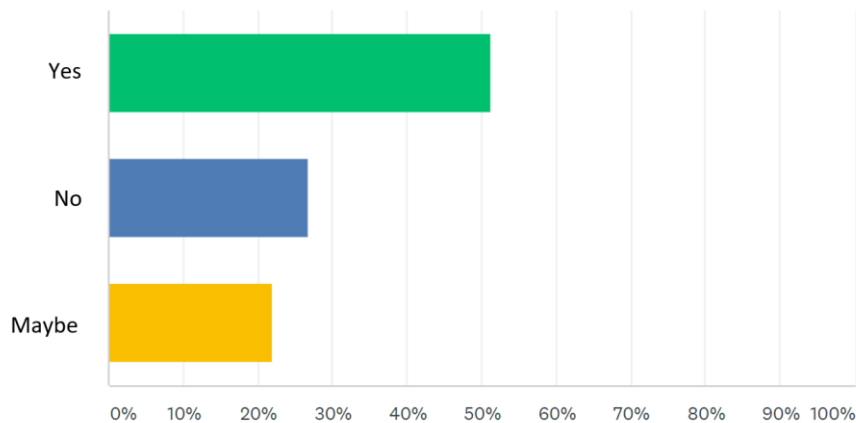
FIGURE 25 WOULD THE RESPONDENTS BUY AGAIN AT AN ONLINE SHOP IF THEY HAD TO PAY THE RETURN COSTS THEMSELVES?

Through the survey, new ideas for the avoidance and prevention of returns also emerged. These are listed below:

- Instead of returning the article, it should be donated. The online retailer should only have to reimburse 90 percent of the purchase price, the rest will be paid by the customer.
- Discount on the product, which does not fit, so that the customer keeps the product, nevertheless.
- If possible, return items to the online retailer's stationary stores to reduce the high flow of parcels.
- Reminder before binding order what will happen to the products should they be returned. (Destruction, reuse, resulting costs/damages, for example: climate, and so on) This should counteract multiple orders.
- Climate, etc.) This should counteract multiple orders.
- Refund of the money, article may be kept, nevertheless. (for certain product groups)
- Very often it was also mentioned that the articles are often not sufficiently described. There should be more comparison tables and videos available to be able to represent the article as real as possible.
- Law for a Maximum of Returning Articles

3.2 Results of the interview with BLANO GmbH + Co KG

The aim of the questions to the employee of BLANCO GmbH + Co KG (BLANCO) was to look at the customers' return behaviour from the point of view of the online retailer. It was important to find out how a company copes with the large number of returns daily and which measures they themselves already implement to avoid returns. However, it was important to find out what the company could still improve to influence the return behaviour of customers so that they avoid returning the goods they ordered.

All information presented here is based on the statements of Markus Studener, head of quality assurance and returns at the logistics centre of BLANCO GmbH + Co KG. However, it should be mentioned that Mr. Studener, due to the protection of trade secrets and in order to ensure competitiveness, could not or was not allowed to answer all the questions mentioned in the appendix.

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At the beginning, Mr. Studener was asked general questions on the returns process. In some places this process differs slightly from the usual one, which was explained in chapter "1.2.2 Reactive returns management". Normally an article is returned directly by the customer if he is not satisfied with the product. There are two variants at BLANCO. One variant is the usual way of returning an item via the return label and the parcel service. If the customer is not satisfied, the customer sends the product back to BLANCO via the online shop or the online retailer from whom the product was purchased. Here, the goods are then further processed and prepared for resale. However, since BLANCO sinks have to be installed in a certain way and this requires a certain amount of skill, craftsmen are often commissioned by the company's own technical customer service (TKD) to install the supplied sink. They are also contacted if defects occur or the sink cannot be installed due to an incorrect order. The second option therefore only comes into play if the sink has already been received and a complaint must be made. The complaint is then sent to the logistics centre via sales or the online shop. The employee then looks at the description of the problem and the return is created in the system. In order to be able to prove that the sink is damaged, the customer must attach pictures to prove the damage. Once the return has been accepted, the customer can arrange to pick up the sink. For this purpose, the various sinks are temporarily stored at a collection point at a kitchen studio until a transport company has been commissioned to bring the sinks under complaint back to the logistics centre. After the return has been delivered and received, the goods are checked. Based on the reason for the order and the reason for the return, a comparison is made of what the employee has received and the reasons for which the item was returned. The resulting information is then forwarded to the office staff. This then results in the creation of a Credit Note. (Studener, 2019)

Sub-question 3: What are the best measures a company can take to influence customers 'return behaviour so that customers avoid returning the ordered goods?

How much is credited to the customer is determined in the company's general terms and conditions. BLANCO's competitors handle this slightly differently from BLANCO. BLANCO's direct competitors include Villeroy & Boch, Franke and WMF (Studener, 2019). It is the same for all providers that the withdrawal must be received by the company by means of a clear declaration by letter, fax or e-mail. What is different is who bears the return costs and who does not. WMF and Villeroy & Boch bear the costs of the return shipment, whereas Franke and BLANCO do not grant this (BLANCO - Gruppe, 2010) (Franke Foodservice Systems GmbH, 2018) (Villeroy & Boch AG, 2019) (WMF Group GmbH, 2019). In case of order cancellation of already ordered goods Franke reserves the right to charge a handling fee of 20% of the value of the goods, but at least EUR 15. A return of goods with a net purchase price of less than EUR 20 is not permitted and there is no right to a refund of the value of the goods in the form of a credit note (Franke Foodservice Systems GmbH, 2018). The other companies, by contrast, write only vaguely in their general terms and conditions about refunds. They only mention that the customer is only liable for any loss of value of the goods if this loss of value is due to handling of the goods that is not necessary to check the condition, properties and functionality of the goods (BLANCO - Gruppe, 2010) (WMF Group GmbH, 2019) (Villeroy & Boch AG, 2019). (Studener, 2019)

At BLANCO, the most frequent reasons for returns are usually due to the customer himself. Almost half of all returns occur because the customer orders the wrong products or cancels the products. Cancellations usually occur due to incorrect care. The customer complains about the sink due to streaks and lime stains in the sink that cannot be removed. Based on the complaint, the technical customer service is instructed to install a replacement sink. On arrival at the customer's premises, it becomes clear to the technical customer service that the sink has been incorrectly cleaned. The customer service therefore only trains the customer in the use of the respective care products and takes the sink that was ordered for replacement back with him. This is returned to BLANCO as a

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cancellation. If the damage occurs after a while, the technical customer service will also be instructed in this case. They will examine the damage and draw up a new order for the replacement of the product, which will then be installed again by an external kitchen manufacturer. It is also common for private customers to order several sinks at the same time for household appliances such as kitchen sinks and taps, and then look to see which ones they ultimately want to install. It is important to mention here that BLANCO products are rarely returned due to product defects. Less than five percent of all articles are returned due to product defects. BLANCO always pays attention to the best quality and workmanship in the production of the articles. (Studener, 2019).

The same applies to transport damage to the product. Less than ten percent of the items ordered are returned due to damage that occurs during transport. BLANCO always makes sure that the selected forwarding company or parcel service provider has a good reputation. By analysing the transport companies in terms of transport damage success rates, it is possible to determine how much of the service provider's delivered goods reach the customer without damage. If the product should nevertheless suffer transport damage, BLANCO credits the customer with 50 percent of the value of the goods. The other reasons for returning the goods, such as errors in the packaging of the goods by BLANCO itself or typing errors by the company, are less than five percent. (Studener, 2019)

The recyclability of the products is also very high at more than 70 percent. As described above, many articles are ordered incorrectly, or several articles are ordered at the same time. For this reason, many products come back in the same condition, can be processed and put back on sale. Water taps however are often taken back broken. The reason for complaint must first be checked for this type of article, as taps are a critical product in which many individual small parts and various technologies are used. This often leads to problems which must be corrected and improved. The customer receives a credit note to compensate for the damage. B-goods are not sold at BLANCO. Every single return that arrives at the logistics centre is checked and processed. If the goods no longer correspond to the new condition, they are not sold on and can no longer be used. (Studener, 2019)

This then raises the question of why so many items are returned anyway and what a company like BLANCO can do about it. On the one hand, BLANCO takes great care to keep the reasons for returns, which could come from the company itself, as low as possible. One point that is very important at BLANCO is professional packaging to protect against damage. BLANCO's products should be protected as much as possible by "EPS" (expanded polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam) and professional packaging, which is specially designed by the Packaging Development Department. In addition, random samples of the products are subjected to additional quality checks before shipment in order to avoid product defects. (Studener, 2019)

The products themselves are presented on the company's own online shop or on various online platforms such as "Amazon.de" or "Bielmaier.de", through a detailed product description and product presentation. The description of the item includes the exact name of the product, its colour and size. In addition, the product description of the item contains the exact dimensions, weight and any associated parts. The item itself is shown in frontal view, installed in a kitchen itself and the most important, the dimensions of the item, which are needed to install the item in your own kitchen. This helps to avoid incorrect purchases in terms of size and colour. In addition, online customers are provided with manuals for download, which they can use to install the item themselves. The BLANCO online shop is constantly being developed and improved by the marketing department. Drawings with detailed dimensional information are constantly being improved and displayed more clearly. It is important that any misunderstandings in the assembly instructions are corrected and that a drawing with dimensional information and a manual for installation is available for each new product. In the meantime, even videos for installing sinks have been created and uploaded to

YouTube to show the installation visually. Various videos have also been created for the proper care and cleaning of the products. If the customer is not sure which item to order, various forms of assistance are available to the customer, including a telephone hotline, a contact form and contacting the technical customer service department itself. BLANCO attaches great importance to customer service, as this often helps customers to make the right decision. Kitchen sinks are products that are not bought very often in life. For this reason, experience with buying sinks is also very limited. Competent customer service provides customers with targeted support and helps them to make the right decision. If the customer does not feel comfortable during a telephone call, he can also use the contact form. However, product reviews can only be found on online platforms such as "amazon.de" and not in the company's own online shop. (Studener, 2019)

However, there is also customer behaviour which cannot be controlled by the company. On the one hand, the consumer behaviour of the customer is unpredictable. The customer decides whether he likes the product or not at delivery. If the colour of the article does not meet their own wishes after all, BLANCO can do little to avoid this and the product is returned. In addition, the lack of know-how is often also a major problem. Craftsmen or kitchen studios usually order the right sink in the right size. However, customers of the online shop are only private customers. These customers often overestimate themselves and order the wrong sink in the wrong size by mistake. It can also lead to the kitchen being installed incorrectly, which then leads to a complaint to the technical customer service department, where a sink must be replaced. These mis-purchases are difficult to avoid from BLANCO. For this reason, as mentioned above, BLANCO is working on clear product information, clear pictures and descriptions of the manual. This information must also be made available to the various kitchen studios so that they too can pass it on to private customers. In addition, various colour samples are being supplied to the kitchen studios for support. (Studener, 2019)

In conclusion, the interviewee pointed out that customer reviews are becoming increasingly important. Nowadays, companies are being founded specifically to write false reviews for a company and its articles in order to present the article better than it is. Therefore, it is important to look at the different reviews in order to recognize possible false reviews. The same applies with the complaints of the customers. If a customer requests a new sink via a picture credits, it is always important to make sure that this picture credits are truthful. Some customers take advantage of this system and try to get the sink a second time with the same picture. Here, the employees of the logistics centre systematically sort out whether a particular picture has been sent before or not (Studener, 2019)

It must always be kept in mind that no sale is possible without a return, since society today hardly buys at all without a possibility of return. It is therefore important to always carry out a detailed error analysis of the various returns, so that errors can be identified and remedied. This also allows the products to be continually improved and possibly even new innovations to be created. (Studener, 2019)

Chapter 4: Discussion of the results

In this chapter 'discussion of results' two elements are discussed; the chosen methodology and the results. The structure in this chapter will be the same as the structure of the chapter 'results', using the sub-questions as the guideline.

4.1 Goal of the bachelor thesis

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to gain an insight into the return's behaviour of online customers in order to gain a concrete picture of German society and to offer companies a new perspective on the prevention of returns. Another goal was to develop new ideas and to see to what extent these ideas are accepted or not by customers. It should be found out which methods are helpful for a company to increase the sales volume by reducing costs due to fewer returns.

Chapter one has dealt with the general topic of returns by defining the most important terms around returns, such as the term "e-commerce" and returns itself. Furthermore, the different methods of reactive and preventive returns management were analysed and processed. In the third chapter it was analysed in detail what exactly should be investigated and in what way. For this research, the issue was first dealt with theoretically using various online sources to learn more about the topic and the difficulties regarding returns management. With the background information gathered in this way, a survey and an interview were conducted. A survey for the customers of the various online shops and an interview with a company that is itself an online retailer. Participation in the survey as well as the interview was on a voluntary basis. However, to generate more attention for the survey among the participants, a prize drawing was held. The participants of the survey could win a voucher of a popular online retailer for clothing and shoes.

4.2 Reflection of the report

Most of the research was carried out as planned. After the time schedule had been established, some changes had to be made, but all goals and deadlines could still be met. By making several adjustments to the theoretical part, the sub-questions were also adjusted, which resulted in the survey and the interview. For this reason, there was less time to do the actual research. At the beginning of the research more time should have been planned for collecting information. Too few scientific sources were used, although they would have been available. By adapting the theoretical part and adding more scientific sources a lot of time was invested, which was intended for the research itself. From the beginning, a clearer structure in the approach to the Bachelor Thesis should have been apparent. This left only four weeks to collect answers for the survey and only one weeks to analyse the results of the survey and interview.

Regarding the survey, it was difficult to find enough respondents in the remaining time. Creating the survey was easy, with SurveyMonkey making it quick and easy to enter questions and publish them quickly. However, it was difficult to find enough respondents in such a short amount of time. The survey was published on various social media portals and shared several times in different forums to find enough respondents. In this way the target of respondents could be reached. When conducting a survey again, it should be ensured that there is enough time left to answer the survey. If necessary, a buffer for possible incidents should be scheduled. The analysis of the survey went very well. SurveyMonkey's independent collection of the survey results made it possible to analyse the results much faster and more clearly.

Organizing and holding the interview was also without any problems. Due to the previous internship and the work as a working student, many basics were known, which allowed the interview to focus on the important facts in returns management. In general, companies are not interested in giving an

interview regarding returns management, because they do not want to reveal facts and figures, as this can lead to a competitive disadvantage (Studener, 2019). For this reason, a small amount of precise data and facts could be collected. Nevertheless, many impressions of the returns management of a company could be collected and analysed. Mr. Studener tried to give as much information as possible and was motivated to answer all questions as good as possible. The interview was scheduled for two hours. These were also needed and used.

The research is reliable because it would produce the same results in a repeatable manner and under the same conditions. The answers given during the interview were written down in detail and can be analysed and processed again at any time. Furthermore, another researcher can also carry out the research. It is important to prepare well for the interview and to ask specific and clear questions during the interview. If the questions are not clear enough, vague answers may arise which could be interpreted differently. The survey can also be carried out by other researchers. The data is collected by SurveyMonkey itself, so the researcher only needs to evaluate it. Because the survey always gives the same answers, there is no room for different interpretations.

Discussion of the results

For the first two sub-questions, the quantitative method was carried out using a survey. Using various social media channels, 386 participants were found. The aim of the survey was to find out background information about the participants. The aim was to analyse the sales behaviour of German online customers and to determine the return behaviour of the various customers.

The main question of this research was: „How can a company with online sales aimed at the German consumer market best prevent customers from returning items?".

The following three sub-questions were used to answer this main question.

Sub-question 1: Which functionalities of an online shop ensure that the customer can make the optimal order decision?

From the results of the quantitative research, it can be seen that the customers usually agree on the functionalities. For the participants, four factors were most important: a clearly arranged website, free shipping, a detailed description of the item and customer ratings. For the customer, the website must be one thing above all: clearly arranged and divided into the various product categories so that the customer can find the desired items as quickly as possible. The customer wants to order the desired product as fast as possible and does not want to search the item for a long time. The more precisely an item is described, the more accurate the customer's idea of the product will be and the less likely it is to be returned. In the case of clothing, for example, information on the size should always be given in the form of a size table, or of the size of the model on the picture. For sinks, on the other hand, the dimensions of the sink must always be indicated. (Deges, Grundlagen des E-Commerce, 2019). The survey also revealed that most items are returned by customers because the item didn't fit. Without information about the size the customer has to guess whether the article is regular-sized or not (Cunningham, Hofstedt, Meer, & Schmitt, 2015). This is not only a weak point for the fashion industry, but also for other industries working with products where the size of the product is relevant. According to the survey, the product ordered often looks different from what it was displayed in the online shop itself. The ordered sink can also have a different colour, as well as a smartphone, which was bought in a special colour. Here the online shop must pay attention to a better description of the article (Studener, 2019).

To provide orientation for many customers, not only the product description is important, but also customer reviews. According to the respondents of the survey, the existence of qualitatively good

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and quantitatively enough customer reviews has an enormous influence on the customer and thus also on the return behaviour. Retailers should therefore encourage their customers to rate their products, vouchers or discounts can also create special motivation for rating.

The information about the shipping conditions is also extremely important for the customer. Customers are now pampered; they expect to be able to hold their order in their hands within one to three days. If it takes longer than expected, returns are also more frequent, as customers are impatient and buy the desired product from another shop. Therefore, a reliable indication of the delivery time is extremely important. The respondents also stated that they would no longer shop in an online shop if they had to pay the return charges for the item themselves, which is why it is no option for an online shop to charge the return charges.

Surprisingly, a selection of several payment methods is also an important function of an online shop. Here, the respondents almost completely agreed that this is a very important part of the shop. Some customers prefer to order easily via "PayPal", others probably want to pay only after receiving the item and therefore order on credit. From this it can be concluded that the online shop must be prepared for all payment methods and should also offer them.

Sub-question 2: What are the most important options for the customer when returning a product/service?

The customers' willingness to return goods is significantly reduced with the increase in the cost of returns, such as the self-payment of return costs. If an online retailer purposely makes it difficult for customers to return products, this usually has a negative effect on customer satisfaction and the probability of repurchase decreases. The question, which examined whether the customer would buy again from the same online shop if he had to pay the return costs himself, has confirmed this, most of the participants answered the question with "No".

Basically, there is the possibility in an online shop to restrict customers with many returns in their payment methods. According to the survey, this method is not very popular and may even discourage the purchase, which is why it is advisable to only let customers with a high probability of returns buy exclusively by prepayment.

On the other hand, online shops can "reward" customers with a low possibility of returns by offering bonuses or discount vouchers. If online shops communicate this in advance, it can be seen as an additional motivation not to return goods. A kind of point-based system could be considered, for example - the customer collects points through non-returned purchases and receives a bonus at certain milestones. This was very popular with the survey respondents and would discourage them from returning items.

The survey also revealed that more than half of the respondents placed multiple orders. Because some customers don't know exactly which size fits them, they order several items at once. To avoid these multiple orders, one possibility would be to offer the customer to reserve the product in other sizes, but to order only one size for the moment. If the ordered size does not fit, the reserved size is sent to the customer and the return is picked up in this way (Potthast, 2016).

The idea of one respondent was also not to return the article, but to hand it in at one of the online retailer's stationary shops if possible. If an online shop also has a store, it can use the opportunity of the return to bring the customer to the stationary shop - and present special offers or promotions there. In the online shop it must be pointed out that an exchange in the shop is usually quicker and less complicated. Many customers then of course demand a refund of the money they have paid, but

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it is still possible to advertise the exchange of goods, gift vouchers or to buy other products in order to bind the customer to the store even longer. (Potthast, 2016)

Surprisingly, the respondents are rather positive about the note of environmental damage to avoid returns. A large proportion of the respondents would refrain from returning goods if they were informed. One respondent even specifically stated that a "pop-up" should appear before the order is placed, when the customer's shopping cart contains the same item in different sizes, or when the customer's shopping cart is unusually large. Here the online retailer can again refer to the reservation of the article and encourage the customer to think again about his upcoming purchase.

Sub-question 3: What are the best measures a company can take to influence customers 'return behaviour so that customers avoid returning the ordered goods?

For the third sub-question, an employee of the logistics centre of BLANCO GmbH + Co KG was interviewed. The temporary results of the survey were included in the interview in order to give the interviewed person an insight into the results of the research so far. The interview revealed that the company often has little to do against returns. If the customer does not like the product for personal reasons, the customer has no choice but to return it. Avoiding returns is an ongoing process: the better the customer needs are known, the more individually a shop with all its contents can be adapted to them. This is why companies must focus primarily on a precise product description and on internal processes, so that no returns arise that are due to their own mistakes.

It was interesting to see that with household products such as sinks and taps, it is common for customers to pay their own return charges. This is because this type of return usually cannot be sent back by parcel service. Surprisingly, in the case of such large products, the customer does not care if he must pay for the return himself. In contrast to relatively small items, the customer seems to have thought better about his purchase here, considering the risk of a return. However, many sinks are also sold through online retailers such as Amazon or Bielmeier Hausgeräte GmbH via secondary dealers. Here, even the largest items are returned without return charges.

For the company, it is especially important to avoid returns which are caused by own mistakes. Even with proven products, quality inspection should not be ignored: With every article it can happen that changes or mistakes occur in the production or in the material of articles that have already been running for a longer period. This can have fatal consequences, especially for articles with good customer ratings, if the high customer expectations generated by the ratings are then no longer satisfied with a high quality. For this reason, random samples of incoming goods are checked for the best quality. In this way, returns due to lack of quality are almost completely eliminated.

In addition, the company must also ensure that the description of the item is good and above all honest. Of course, the articles in the online shop need to be described in an appealing way. Large and zoomable pictures must be available. The company must always pay attention to a very precise and detailed explanation of the products to avoid misunderstandings. In addition, operating instructions are created and sent with the article to explain the article even more precisely to the customer.

But not only a high-quality product is very important from the company's point of view. Attractive and secure packaging is also crucial for the customer's return behaviour. After ordering, the customer waits for his shipment - this creates anticipation. To prevent this from turning into disappointment, the items must "arrive safely" in every sense. Companies must therefore attach great importance to the selection of transport service providers. But there is not only the risk of transport damage. As logistics companies are often very busy and parcels sometimes fall off sorting

bands, in case of doubt it is better to choose stronger packaging that will protect the goods even if they fall off.

Customer loyalty with the help of customer service is also very important for a company. New customers are gained who call a shop for information and advice and then order by electronic devices. Friendliness and professional competence play a major role here. The customers want to feel comfortable and want to be advised quickly and professionally. The broader the service channels are, the better. While some customers prefer to communicate by telephone, others prefer communication by e-mail or chat. In addition, it is worth evaluating incoming product reviews regularly, because they often provide a helpful source of information for retailers to find out which product details are particularly important for customers and should therefore be included in the product descriptions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Returns management is a real challenge for every online retailer. They are stuck in a real dilemma between economic considerations on the one hand and customer satisfaction on the other. Since there is a wide range of online shops available today, long-term customer loyalty can only be achieved by maximizing customer satisfaction. On the Internet, customer dissatisfaction is "punished" more quickly than anywhere else. But there are solutions that can significantly reduce the number of returns. This increases sales and at the same time increases customer satisfaction and ultimately, in the best case, customer loyalty. In order to stay in the market permanently, an online retailer must be able to master this balancing act. He will be able to master this through preventive and reactive returns management. But how can a company with online sales aimed at the German consumer market best prevent customers from returning items?

This question will now be answered by means of the following three sub-questions.

Sub-question 1: Which functionalities of an online shop ensure that the customer can make the optimal order decision?

The goal must be customer satisfaction. If a customer is successful in feeling well advised and cared for in the long term, the chances are good that he or she will be won as a permanent customer. Any kind of "punishment" of the customer is not very effective and counterproductive.

The most important measure is a meaningful product or service description. There must be an informative product description that provides the relevant detailed information for the customer. High-resolution images in different views of the product are also important to enable the customer to view the product from several perspectives.

Another important measure is the customer ratings. Through them the customers get additional information about the product. In this way, the customer can form his own opinion with the help of objective opinions from others and thus arrive at a decision.

Another important point is the indication of free shipping and the choice of different payment methods. The customer is not willing to pay for shipping and would also use another online shop if he/she could get the product there for the same price only without shipping costs. The same applies to the payment methods. Every customer is different and wants to be able to pay in different ways. One prefers to pay in advance, the other via PayPal. By providing different payment methods a wider range of customers can be reached.

Sub-question 2: What are the most important options for the customer when returning a product/service?

The survey made it very clear that restricting payment methods does not have the desired effect if the customer returns too many. On the contrary, the customer becomes dissatisfied and turns away from the online retailer.

Instead, the online retailer should also attach great importance to discounts and bonuses. If the customer hasn't returned an item for a long time, he can be "rewarded" for this with special discounts on his next purchase. On the one hand, this not only helps the company to process fewer returns, but also binds the customer to the online shop. Various reminders can be used to remind the customer that if he makes another purchase in the online shop, he will be given a discount code. In this way the customer is motivated to buy again in the same online shop and is bound to the online shop. The same applies to the bonuses. For example, a points system allows the customer to collect

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points for every product that he does not return. From a certain number of points on, these can be exchanged for products.

The function "Reserve article" can be just as helpful. Multiple orders account for a large proportion of returns. If the customer has several sizes of an article in the shopping cart, a "pop-up" should remind him of the consequences for the environment. In the course of this the customer can be offered to order one size of the article and reserve the other sizes. In this way, the customer is sent only one part instead of two or three, which may fit immediately. If this is not the case, the customer can be sure that the other sizes have been put aside for him and are not yet sold out.

Online shops that also have a store can also offer their customers to return the items to be returned to the store. This saves the customer the trip to the parcel shop and the online shop the costs of the return. Furthermore, the stationary store can also carry out an exchange when the return is handed in and bind the customer to the shop by offering discounts. On the one hand, this supports customer loyalty and on the other hand, the store is also supported once again.

Sub-question 3: What are the best measures a company can take to influence customers 'return behaviour so that customers avoid returning the ordered goods?

It is important for the company itself to always check the quality of the products. The survey revealed that defective goods were the third most common reason for returns. In order to avoid returns which are the fault of the company itself, regular and accurate quality control is of great importance. In addition, the employees should be trained to handle the packages as carefully as possible to avoid transport damages. In the same way, good packaging should also be considered important. On the one hand, the goods should be protected from knocks and falls, but they should also be packed well enough to leave a positive impression on the customer.

Furthermore, professional and friendly customer service is very important. This should be varied, which means it should be accessible by phone, e-mail or chat. Every customer is individual and wants to communicate with the companies in different ways. A competent advice or answer will increase customer satisfaction and the customer will be happy to buy from the company again. In addition, the contact can help to avoid possible mistakes or even prevent customers from returning the item, for example by offering discounts.

Of course, the company must continue to work on the product descriptions and images. By analysing various mis-purchases, the company can analyse which descriptions are not appropriate and can be written more clearly again. In addition, the pictures should always be up-to-date and taken from all perspectives.

In summary, the main question can be answered by saying that the company should place a lot of emphasis on product descriptions, customer reviews and good customer service. On the other hand, however, consideration must always be given to the company's own quality and process reliability in order to avoid unnecessary errors. This leads to the following recommendation

5.2 Recommendation

Through the research carried out, solutions for companies have been identified to reduce the large number of returns. Optimizing and professionalizing returns management and logistics is extremely important for companies in order to avoid sources of error and to bind customers. Returns can never be completely avoided, but they can be reduced.

It should always be weighed up how important cost savings are to the company in terms of customer satisfaction. Through research it became clear that by "punishing" customers, there is no improvement in sight, as customers will disappear. It should be clear to the company that customer satisfaction should come before costs.

In summary, online retailers must pay attention to their own quality and speed, as well as to the best possible customer satisfaction. Keeping their own quality at the highest level helps the company to eradicate their own mistakes and avoid careless mistakes. On the one hand, these mistakes not only cause costs by sending back the return itself, the processing of the return is also very expensive. In the end, the product can no longer be reused, and the processing costs were completely free of charge. In addition, a reliable and safe transport of the packages is of great importance. The faster the package can be delivered to the customer, the more satisfied the customer. At the same time, the package should also arrive at the customer's location by using attractive and secure packaging without any transport damage. The customer also attaches great importance to free shipping.

Furthermore, companies should pay attention to the customer himself. Precise product descriptions and pictures can help to avoid mis purchases. Customer reviews are also important for the customer, so that the customer can form his own opinion through the various comments and thus come to a purchase decision. In order to be able to answer the individual wishes and questions of the customer, good customer service very important. Customer service is often underestimated and therefore also neglected. Customers try to help themselves with the decision-making process via the service, but if the service is not competent or can only be reached via a telephone hotline, this often discourages customers from buying. Offering a contact form or even a chat is a more pleasant way of communication for many customers.

In order to avoid the returns themselves, discounts and bonuses are very interesting for the customer. The customer wants to be rewarded for not returning the item. This can be done in different ways; by bonus points on the customer account of the online shop, or by discount codes or different vouchers. To prevent multiple orders, the company can suggest that the customer reserve the items. On the one hand, this reduces the return costs and on the other hand avoids multiple orders.

It should always be kept in mind that returns are an indispensable part of online trading. Without the possibility of returns, online retailers would not be able to survive. Therefore, the goal of companies is not to ban returns completely, but to optimize the online shop in such a way that only occasional goods are returned, so that customer satisfaction can be guaranteed.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Germany

Germany is the largest economy in Europe and the fourth largest in the world. Many pioneering inventions have been developed here. Science and research have a high priority and a long tradition in Germany. In Germany, more than 20 % of the population is from other nations, which is why it is regarded as an open-minded and tolerant culture (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2019)

Demographic

With approximately 83 million people, Germany has more inhabitants than ever before. Last year, the population grew by 227,000 or 0.3 percent, according to the Federal Statistical Office. The reason for this is the high number of immigrants. In 2018, more than 386.000 people immigrated than emigrated. This also leads to an increase in the international population in Germany (ARD, 2019).

Germany is currently during demographic change. The declining number of people of younger age and the rising number of older people are drastically shifting the demographic framework (see figure 2).

Statistically, in today's population every second person in Germany is older than 45 years and every fifth person is older than 66 years. The German population of young people is rising, with birth rates rising for the first time since 2012 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2019).
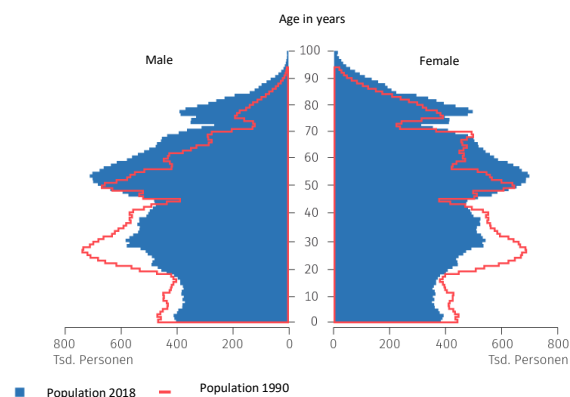
©FIGURE 26 POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE 2018 (STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT, 2019)

Economic

The gross domestic product (GDP), which is used as an indicator of a country's economic strength, has developed positively since the beginning of the 1990s. It comprises the value of all goods and services produced within a country. Exceptions are the recessions in 1993 and the beginning of the new millennium. The impact of the economic and financial crisis on the German economy became very clear in 2009: GDP fell by 5.6 percent year-on-year. But already in the following year GDP rose sharply again by 4.1 percent - growth rates had returned to pre-crisis levels. Germany has thus come through the crisis very well by European standards. In 2018, Germany's gross domestic product rose by 1.5 percent year-on-year in price-adjusted terms. The German economy thus grew successfully in nine years (research, statista, 2019).

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FIGURE 27 GDP OF GERMANY FROM '92 - 2018 IN PERCENT (RESEARCH, STATISTA, 2019)
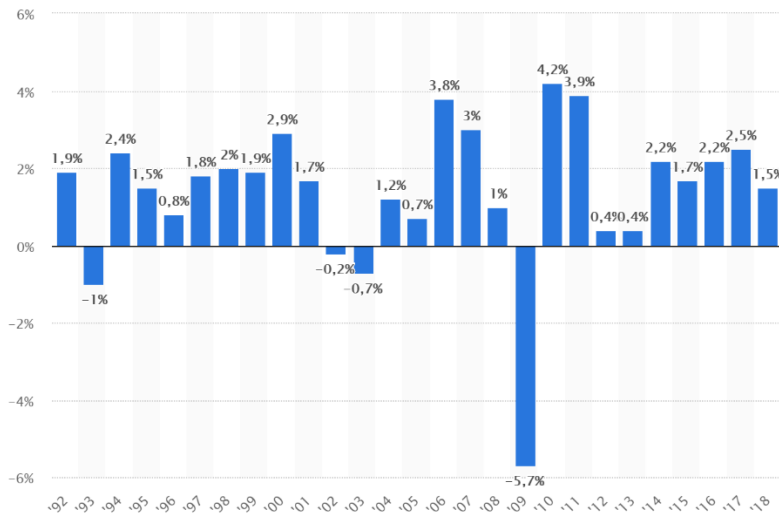
Culture of Germany

In order to get to know the German customer better, it is important to consider the cultural values of the customer. To illustrate this graphically, the German culture is compared with its neighbour, the Netherlands.
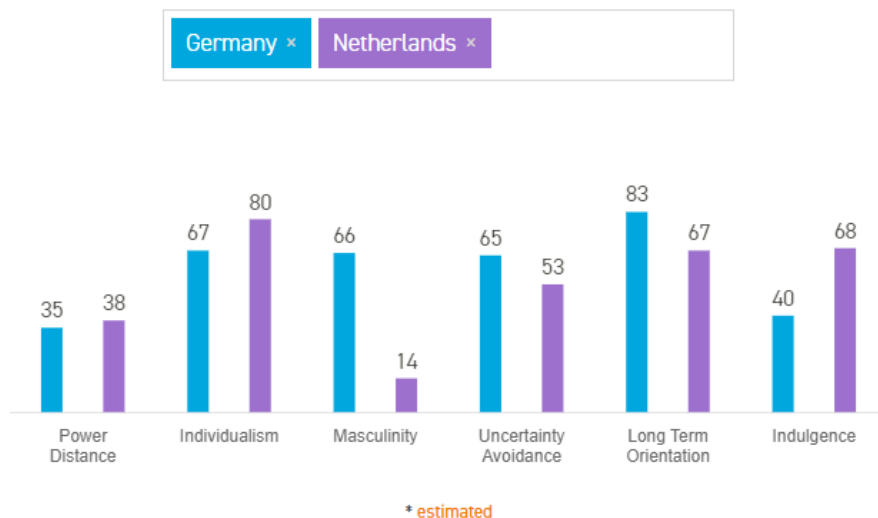
FIGURE 28 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS ACCORDING TO GEERT HOFSTEDE (HOFSTEDE, 2019)

Germany and the Netherlands have different cultures.

In terms of Power Distance, the countries are very similar. Both countries are equally strong or weak in their support for gender equality. Germany is characterized by a strong middle class, so this number is not surprising in Germany. In the German culture, co-determination rights are very important. Furthermore, they attach great importance to a direct style of communication and repeatedly challenge the leadership to show competence in order to be accepted. In the Netherlands, independence is more important. Equality among employees, informal interaction and decentralized power are important characteristics.

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Individualism is very pronounced in both countries. The Netherlands' is more pronounced than Germany. This means for the Dutch people; family and their own person are very important for them. The employer-employee relationship is intended to provide mutual advantage and merit is to be rewarded with promotions. This is different in Germany. Here responsibility and sense of duty are very important, which is defined by the contract between employer and employee. (Hofstede Insights, 2019)

In the points "Uncertainty Avoidance" and "Long Term Orientation" the two countries are very similar. The big differences are in "masculinity" and "indulgence". The Netherlands is a very feminine society where Germany is a masculine society. For example, this can be seen, in the school system, which in Germany requires good performance from the outset in order to be able to go to the best type of school at the age of ten. People derive their self-esteem from their tasks. Managers are required to be strong and determined. Instead, the Netherlands attaches more importance to a good balance between work and life. Employees are more supported here and equality, solidarity and quality are highly valued here. Conflicts are solved with compromises and long negotiations in order to find the best solution together. (Hofstede Insights, 2019).

Socio-Cultural

In terms of returns, Germany is one of the countries with the highest number of returns per inhabitant. Millions of online customers surf the internet, discover a nice t-shirt or jacket and are not sure in which size the garment fits best. Online retailers make it easy for customers by offering free returns, which means millions of items are sent back to suppliers every day. Online retailers outsource therefore the entire shipping process, from customer orders to returns, to logistics companies in order to counteract the large volume of returns. (Hofstede Insights, 2019)

51 percent of all Germans buy articles in various sizes and return the unsuitable articles. Dutch and British people, only 46 and 43 percent respectively send articles back, and Polish people only 29 percent (Stahl, 2018).

The fashion industry is hit particularly hard. According to a study by the EHI Institute, almost every third retailer of textiles and accessories must take back between 40 and 50 percent of the goods sold. At 13 percent, it is even more than every second article. For its study, the Cologne-based market research institute surveyed 105 mail-order companies, which together had a turnover of almost eleven billion euros (Stahl, 2018).

According to the survey, an average of 70 percent of returns can be resold. Nine percent of the retailers surveyed stated that they could only sell individual parts again - often because the goods had been so badly affected that they could no longer be offered to other customers. Other items of clothing must be cleaned because a coffee stain is discovered on the blouse or the sweater smells of sweat (Stahl, 2018).

Ecological

The German population increasingly attaches strategic importance to environmental and climate protection for central political tasks. Even in times of crisis, environmental awareness remains stable in the midfield of problem perception.

The perceived importance of environmental and climate protection for coping with other political tasks has increased in recent years. According to current surveys conducted by the Federal Environment Agency, two thirds consider environmental and climate protection to be a fundamental condition for mastering future tasks such as globalization. Half of those surveyed believe that environmental and climate protection are essential securing competitiveness and creating jobs.

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According to the respondents, climate protection must help healthiness of people. About four out of five respondents have the opinion that sustainable development has effect on people's healthiness, improves their quality of life and enables more closeness to nature. More than half expect sustainable development to lead to a better community among people and more time for self-determined living. In addition, the majority hopes that the economy will be more geared to people's needs. (Hofstede Insights, 2019)

Accordingly, environmental and climate protection continue to be among the central social challenges from the citizens' point of view. For one of five people in Germany, environmental and climate protection are among the most important problems Germany is currently facing. (Gellrich, 2019).

Appendix 2 Survey questions

The survey is conducted in German, as the bachelor thesis is focused on German online customers.

Lieber Teilnehmer,

Im Rahmen meiner Bachelorarbeit an der Aeres University of Applied Sciences Dronten, Niederlande, untersuche ich das Retourenverhalten von Online-Kunden. Ich möchte gerne die Gründe Ihres Retournierens erfahren. Was finden Sie wichtig in einem Online-Shop und auf was könnten Sie verzichten?

Das Ausfüllen dieser Umfrage dauert nur ein paar Minuten und wird mir sehr bei der Ausarbeitung meiner Bachelorarbeit helfen. Antworten und Daten werden natürlich vertraulich behandelt und nicht an Dritte weitergeleitet. Nach der Bearbeitung der Umfrage werden alle Daten gelöscht.

Am Ende der Umfrage werden Sie gefragt, ob Sie an einem Gewinnspiel teilnehmen wollen. Mit der Chance auf den Gewinn eines 20€ Gutscheins von Zalando möchte ich mich bei Ihnen für die Teilnahme bedanken. Bitte hinterlassen Sie Ihre E-Mail-Adresse, um an dem Gewinnspiel teilzunehmen.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

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1. Geschlecht
    a. Man
    b. Frau
2. Alter
    a. 18 – 25 Jahre
    b. 26 – 35 Jahre
    c. 36 – 45 Jahre
    d. 46 – 55 Jahre
    e. 56 – 65 Jahre
    f. 65 Jahre oder älter

3. Wie oft bestellen Sie bei Online – Shops?
    a. Nie
    b. Höchstens einmal im Monat
    c. Ein bis zweimal im Monat
    d. Mehrmals im Monat
    e. Mehrmals in der Woche
    f. Fast täglich

4. Von welcher Warengruppe bestellen Sie am häufigsten? 1 ist das am häufigsten bestellte, 8 das am wenigsten bestellte
    a. Kleidung und Schuhe
    b. Haushaltselektronik
    c. Unterhaltungselektronik und Foto
    d. Spielzeug
    e. Bücher
    f. Musik und Filme
    g. Geschenkartikel

h. Möbel und Heimtextilien

5. Wie viele Artikel bestellen Sie im Durchschnitt bei Ihren Bestellungen?
   a. 1
   b. 2 – 3
   c. 4 – 5
   d. 6 – 8
   e. 9 oder mehr

6. Was ist Ihnen bei einem Online Shop wichtig? (Mehrfeldauswahl möglich)
   a. Übersichtliche Website
   b. Größentabelle
   c. Größenangaben, was das Fotomodel für eine Größe trägt
   d. Detaillierte Beschreibungen des Artikels
   e. Kundenbewertungen
   f. Zoomfunktion des Fotos
   g. Kostenloser Versand
   h. Widerrufsrecht von mehr als 14 Tagen
   i. Sonstiges: _____

7. Wie wichtig sind Ihnen folgende Kriterien bei der Nutzung von Online – Shops: (Skala von Sehr wichtig – Eher wichtig – Eher unwichtig – Sehr unwichtig)
   a. Angebot einer App
   b. Ansprechende Produktpräsentationen
   c. Informationen über Versandbedingungen
   d. Integration von Social – Media – Elementen
   e. Optimierte Darstellung auf mobilen Endgeräten
   f. Produktbeschreibungen
   g. Produktbewertung/ -empfehlungen anderer Kunden
   h. Produktkategorie-Seiten/ Themenseiten
   i. Professionelle Gestaltung der Website
   j. Übersichtliche Startseite
   k. Weiterführende Produktinformationen
   l. Auswahl von mehreren Zahlungsmethoden (PayPal, Kreditkarte, Vorkasse etc.)

8. Bestellen Sie gerne mehrere Größen eines Artikels, wenn Sie sich nicht sicher sind, welche Größe die richtige wäre?
   a. Ja
   b. Nein
   c. Nicht immer, nur wenn: _____

9. Haben Sie schonmal eine Bestellung wieder zurückgeschickt?
   a. Ja
   b. Nein

10. Wenn Ja, wieviel Prozent Ihrer Bestellungen schicken Sie wieder zurück?
    a. 10 – 20%
    b. 30 – 40%
    c. 50 – 60%

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  d. 70 – 80%

  e. 90 – 100%

11. Warum haben Sie schon einmal einen Artikel zurückgesendet? (Mehrfeldauswahl möglich)
  a. Produkt zu groß oder zu klein
  b. Ware defekt
  c. Schlechte Verarbeitung
  d. Ware sieht anders aus als beschrieben
  e. Funktionen nicht wie beschrieben
  f. Fehlkauf
  g. Besseres Angebot entdeckt
  h. Ich wollte das Produkt nur anschauen
  i. Bedienung zu kompliziert
  j. Sonstiges: _____

12. Denken Sie, dass retournierte Ware vernichtet wird?
  a. Nein, es werden keine Artikel vernichtet
  b. Es werden maximal 5 % der Artikel vernichtet
  c. Es werden maximal 10 % der Artikel vernichtet

13. Würde Sie einen der folgenden Punkte motivieren, um den Artikel doch nicht zu retournieren? (Mehrfeldauswahl möglich) (Pro Methode: Ja – Eher Ja – Eher Nein – Nein)
  a. Rabatt auf Kaufpreis
  b. Erhalten von Boni nach Ablauf der Widerrufsfrist, welche beim nächsten Einkauf verwendet werden können
  c. Eine persönliche Grußkarte die der Bestellung beiliegt
  d. Rabatt durch ein Posting des Online – Shops auf Social Media
  e. Gutscheine für andere Online – Shops nach Ablauf der Widerrufsfrist
  f. Rabatt auf die Bestellung bei der Verwendung einer bestimmten Zahlungsmethode (z.B. Vorkasse)
  g. Einschränkung der Zahlungsmöglichkeiten bei einer hohen Anzahl an Retouren
  h. Einschränkung des Warenkorbwerts für die nächste Bestellung
  i. Kostenlose Probeartikel beim Verzicht auf die Retoure
  j. Das Nicht-Beilegen eines Retourenklebers (Mehraufwand durch Kontaktieren des Kundenservice)
  k. Erhebung von Rücksendegebühren
  l. Hinweis auf Umweltschäden

14. Würden Sie bei einem Online – Shop nochmal einkaufen, wenn es Probleme bei der Rücksendung gab?
  a. Ja
  b. Nein
  c. Vielleicht, bei einer exklusiven Auswahl an Artikeln.

15. Wäre das selbst Bezahlen der Rücksendekosten ein Grund für Sie, um nicht mehr in dem Online-Shop einzukaufen?
  a. Ja
  b. Nein

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c. Vielleicht

16. Haben Sie selbst noch Ideen oder Wünsche, was Sie motivieren würde, die Bestellung nicht zurück zu schicken?

a. _____

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Appendix 3 Survey questions English

Dear participant,

As part of my bachelor thesis at the Aeres University of Applied Sciences Dronten, Netherlands, I am investigating the return behaviour of online customers. I would like to know the reasons for your return. What do you find important in an online shop?

Completing this survey only takes a few minutes and will help me a lot with my bachelor thesis. Answers and data will of course be treated confidentially and will not be passed on to third parties. All data will be deleted after the survey has been processed.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you want to take part in a competition. With the chance to win a 20€ voucher from Zalando I would like to thank you for participating. Please leave your e-mail address to participate in the competition.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Jana Mürdter

1. Sex
   a. Male
   b. Female
2. Age
   a. 18 – 25 years
   b. 26 – 35 years
   c. 36 – 45 years
   d. 46 – 55 years
   e. 56 – 65 years
   f. 65 years or older

3. How often do you order at online shops?
   a. Never
   b. Once a month at the most
   c. Once or twice a month
   d. Several times a month
   e. Several times a week
   f. Almost daily

4. From which product group do you order the most? 1 is the most ordered, 8 the least ordered
   a. Clothing and shoes
   b. Household electronics
   c. Consumer electronics and photo
   d. Toys
   e. Books
   f. Music and movies
   g. Gifts
   h. Furniture and household textiles
5. How many articles do you order on average with your orders?
   a. 1
   b. 2 – 3

    c.   4 – 5

    d.   6 – 8

    e.   9 or more

6. What is important to you in an online shop? (multiple field selection possible)
   a. Well-structured website
   b. Size table
   c. Size details, what size does the model wear?
   d. Detailed descriptions of the article
   e. Customer reviews
   f. Zoom function of the photo
   g. Free shipping
   h. Right of withdrawal of more than 14 days
   i. Other: _____

7. How important are the following criteria to you when using online shops: (Scale from Very important - Rather important - Rather unimportant - Very unimportant)?
   a. Offer of an App
   b. Attractive product presentations
   c. Information on shipping conditions
   d. Integration of Social - Media - Elements
   e. Optimized display on mobile devices
   f. Product descriptions
   g. Product ratings/ recommendations from other customers
   h. Product Category Pages/ Topic Pages
   i. Professional design of the website
   j. Clear homepage
   k. Further product information
   l. Selection of several payment methods (PayPal, credit card, prepayment etc.)

8. Do you like to order several sizes of an article if you are not sure which size would be the right one?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not always, only when: _____

9. Have you ever returned an order?
   a. Yes
   b. No

10. If yes, what percentage of your orders do you send back?
    a. 10 – 20%
    b. 30 – 40%
    c. 50 – 60%
    d. 70 – 80%
    e. 90 – 100%

11. Why have you ever returned an article? (multiple field selection possible)
    a. Product too large or too small

b. Product faulty
c. Bad workmanship
d. Product looks different than described
e. Functions not as described
f. False purchase
g. Better offer discovered
h. I just wanted to see the product
i. Operation too complicated
j. Other: _____

12. Do you think returned goods will be destroyed?
    a. No, no articles will be destroyed.
    b. A maximum of 5 % of the articles will be destroyed.
    c. A maximum of 10 % of the articles will be destroyed.
    d. More than 10 % of the articles will be destroyed.

13. Would one of the following points motivate you not to return the article after all? (multiple field selection possible) (Per method: Yes – probably yes – probably no – No)
1. Discount on the purchasing price
2. Receipt of bonuses after expiry of the withdrawal period, which may be used for the next purchase
3. A personal greeting card enclosed with the order
4. Discount by posting the online shop on social media
5. Vouchers for other online shops after the expiry of the withdrawal period
6. Discount on the order when using a certain payment method (e.g. prepayment)
7. Limitation of payment options with a high number of returns
8. Restriction of the shopping basket value for the next order
9. Free samples if return is not required
10. Lack of enclosing a return label (additional effort by contacting customer service)
11. Return costs must be paid by the customer
12. Indication of environmental damage

14. Would you buy again at an online shop if there were problems with the return?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Perhaps, with an exclusive selection of articles.
15. Would paying the return costs yourself be a reason for you not to shop in the online shop anymore?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe

16. Do you have any ideas or wishes of your own which would motivate you not to send the order back?

Appendix 4 Questions for the interview with BLANCO GmbH + Co KG
The interview will be conducted in German, as the company is headquartered in Germany.

1) Retourenprozess im Allgemeinen
2) Kosten einer Retoure pro Artikel?
3) Wieviel Artikel erhält BLANCO pro Woche?
4) Bearbeitungskosten je Retoure?
5) Die meisten Gründe der Retoure?
6) Wiederverwertbarkeit der Retouren?
7) Welcher Maßnahmen trifft BLANCO um Retouren zu vermeiden?

   Mögliche Antworten:

   1. Detaillierte Produktbeschreibung und genaue Produktdarstellung
   2. Professionelle Verpackung zum Schutz vor Beschädigungen
   3. Qualitätssicherung des Produkts vor dem Versand
   4. Kurze Lieferzeit
   5. Angebot von Hilfestellungen (z.B. Telefon Hotline)
   6. Produktbewertungen durch Käufer (z.B. Erfahrungsberichte)
8) Warum können manche Retouren nicht verhindert werden?
9) Verbesserung der Website eine Option?
10) Welche Art von Kunden senden die meisten Artikel zurück?

English version:

   a) Return process in general
   b) Costs of one return per article?
   c) How many articles are returned to BLANCO per week?
   d) Processing costs per return?
   e) Most reasons for a return?
   f) Reusability of returns?
   g) What measures does BLANCO take to avoid returns?

      Possible answers:

      1. detailed product description and exact product presentation
      2. professional packaging to protect against damage
      3. quality assurance of the product before dispatch
      4. short delivery time
      5. offer of assistance (e.g. telephone hotline)
      6. product reviews by buyers (e.g. field reports)
   h) Why can't some returns be prevented?
   i) Website improvement an option?
   j) What kind of customers send back the most items?

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Appendix 5 Text for Social Media

Hallo zusammen,

Im Rahmen meiner Bachelorarbeit, untersuche ich das Retourenverhalten von Online-Kunden. Ich möchte gerne die Gründe Ihres Retournierens erfahren.

Das Ausfüllen dieser Umfrage dauert nur ein paar Minuten und wird mir sehr bei der Ausarbeitung meiner Bachelorarbeit helfen.

Und das Beste ist: Um mich bei den Teilnehmern zu bedanken, verlose ich einen 20€ Gutschein von Zalando! 😊

Vielen Dank für eure Teilnahme 😊

https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/Retoure

Hello, everybody,

Within the scope of my bachelor thesis, I am investigating the return behaviour of online customers. I would like to know the reasons for your returns.

Filling out this survey takes only a few minutes and will help me a lot in writing my bachelor thesis.

And the best thing is: To thank the participants, I'm giving away a 20€ voucher from Zalando! 😊

Thank you very much for your participation 😊

https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/Retoure

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

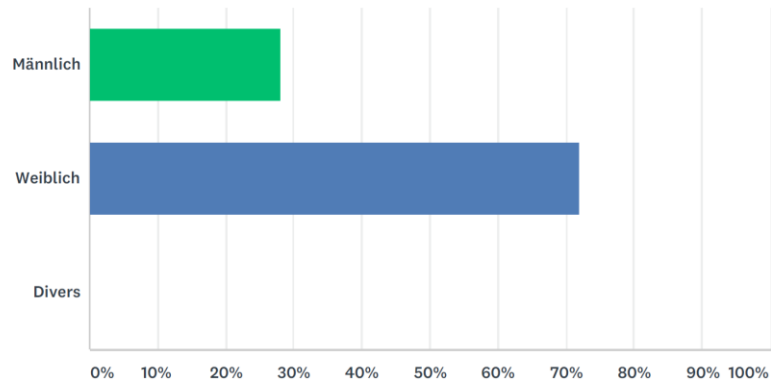## Appendix 6 Results Survey

Kundenumfrage zum Thema Retoure   SurveyMonkey

Q1 Geschlecht

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Männlich	27.98%	108
Weiblich	72.02%	278
Divers	0.00%	0
TOTAL		386

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Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Q2 Alter

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
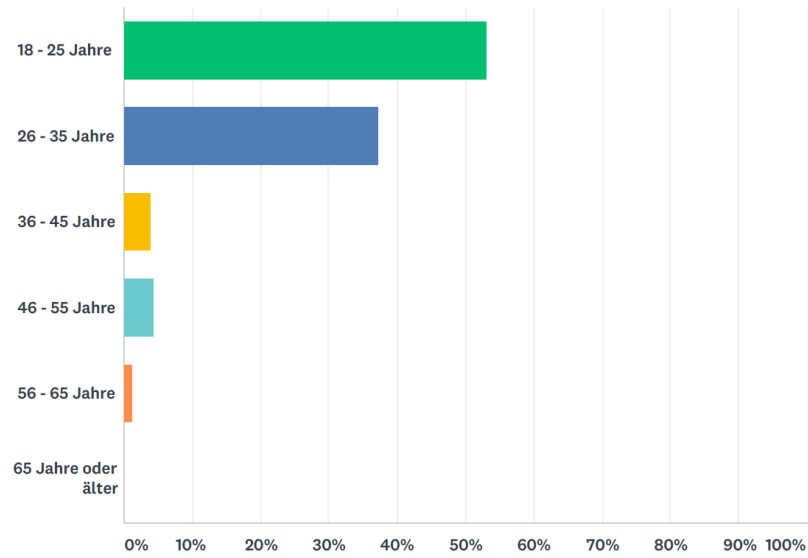
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18 - 25 Jahre	53.11%	205
26 - 35 Jahre	37.31%	144
36 - 45 Jahre	3.89%	15
46 - 55 Jahre	4.40%	17
56 - 65 Jahre	1.30%	5
65 Jahre oder älter	0.00%	0
TOTAL		386

Q3 Wie oft bestellen Sie online Produkte und/oder Dienstleistungen?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
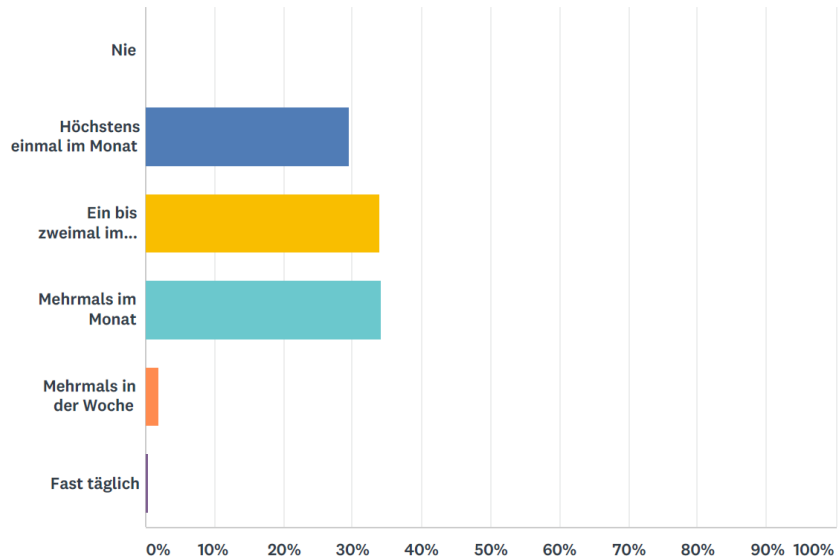
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Nie	0.00%	0
Höchstens einmal im Monat	29.53%	114
Ein bis zweimal im Monat	33.94%	131
Mehrmals im Monat	34.20%	132
Mehrmals in der Woche	1.81%	7
Fast täglich	0.52%	2
TOTAL		386

Q4 Von welcher Warengruppe bestellen Sie am häufigsten? 1 ist das am häufigsten bestellte, 8 das am wenigsten bestellte.
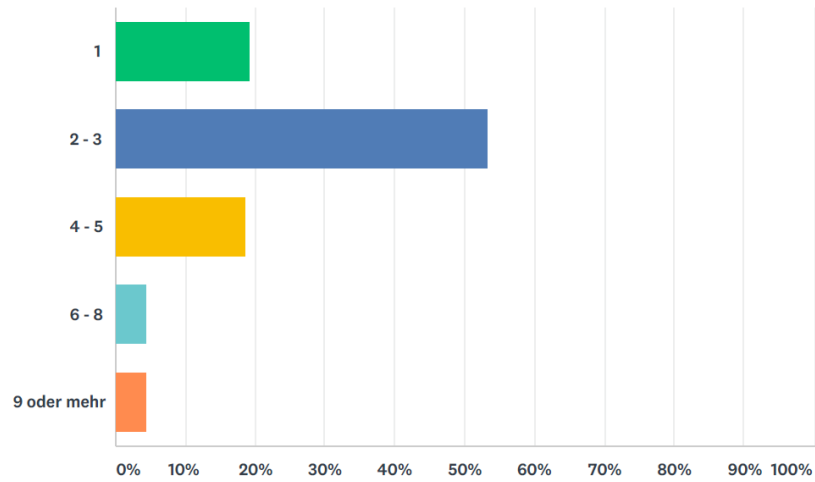
Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
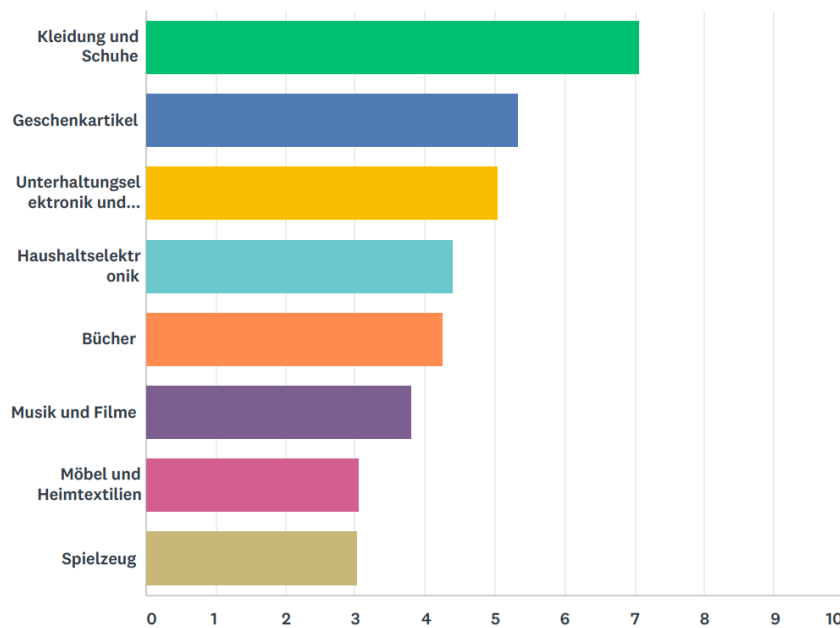
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL	SCORE
Kleidung und Schuhe	70.98% 274	9.07% 35	6.74% 26	3.11% 12	1.55% 6	1.30% 5	2.07% 8	5.18% 20	386	7.07
Geschenkartikel	4.92% 19	28.24% 109	19.69% 76	18.13% 70	12.69% 49	6.22% 24	8.55% 33	1.55% 6	386	5.34
Unterhaltungselektronik und Foto	8.03% 31	12.69% 49	24.09% 93	18.39% 71	15.54% 60	12.18% 47	6.99% 27	2.07% 8	386	5.04
Haushaltselektronik	3.89% 15	16.84% 65	11.14% 43	18.65% 72	12.69% 49	14.51% 56	14.77% 57	7.51% 29	386	4.40
Bücher	4.40% 17	13.47% 52	17.36% 67	10.36% 40	13.21% 51	13.47% 52	18.91% 73	8.81% 34	386	4.25
Musik und Filme	3.37% 13	7.77% 30	10.88% 42	12.69% 49	15.28% 59	20.98% 81	16.58% 64	12.44% 48	386	3.80
Möbel und Heimtextilien	1.81% 7	5.96% 23	5.70% 22	9.33% 36	13.99% 54	16.06% 62	16.84% 65	30.31% 117	386	3.05
Spielzeug	2.59% 10	5.96% 23	4.40% 17	9.33% 36	15.03% 58	15.28% 59	15.28% 59	32.12% 124	386	3.04

Q5 Wieviele Artikel bestellen Sie im Durchscnitt bei Ihren Bestellungen
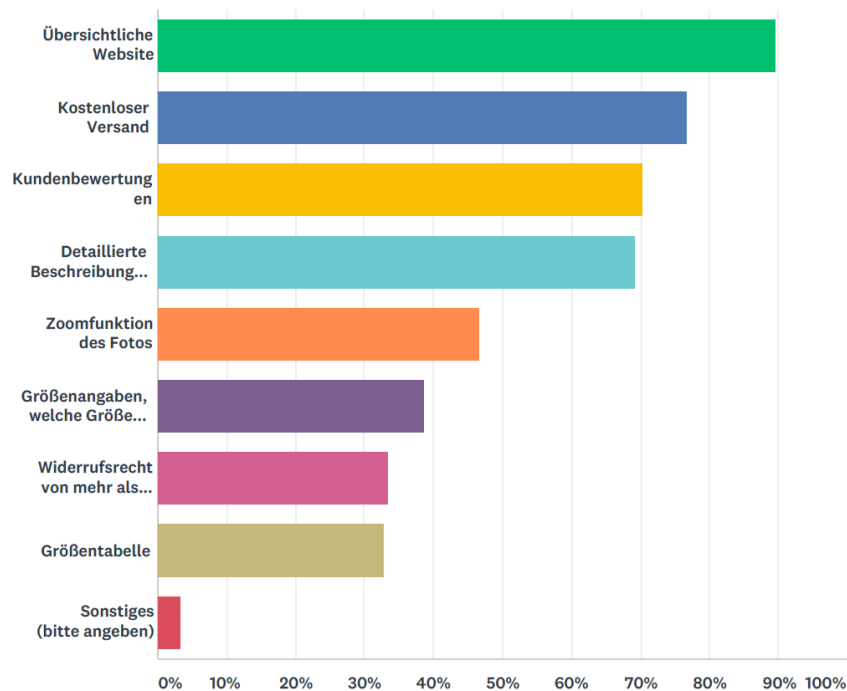
Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	19.17%	74
2 - 3	53.37%	206
4 - 5	18.65%	72
6 - 8	4.40%	17
9 oder mehr	4.40%	17
TOTAL		386

Q6 Was ist Ihnen bei einem Online Shop wichtig? Mehrfeldauswahl möglich

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Übersichtliche Website	89.64%	346
Kostenloser Versand	76.68%	296
Kundenbewertungen	70.21%	271
Detaillierte Beschreibungen des Artikels	69.17%	267
Zoomfunktion des Fotos	46.63%	180
Größenangaben, welche Größe das Fotomodel für eine Größe trägt	38.60%	149
Widerrufsrecht von mehr als 14 Tagen	33.42%	129
Größentabelle	32.90%	127
Sonstiges (bitte angeben)	3.37%	13
Total Respondents: 386		

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Gute Fotos und/oder Videos, auf denen man das Produkt deutlich erkennen kann

02.01.2020 21:19   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

genügend Fotos

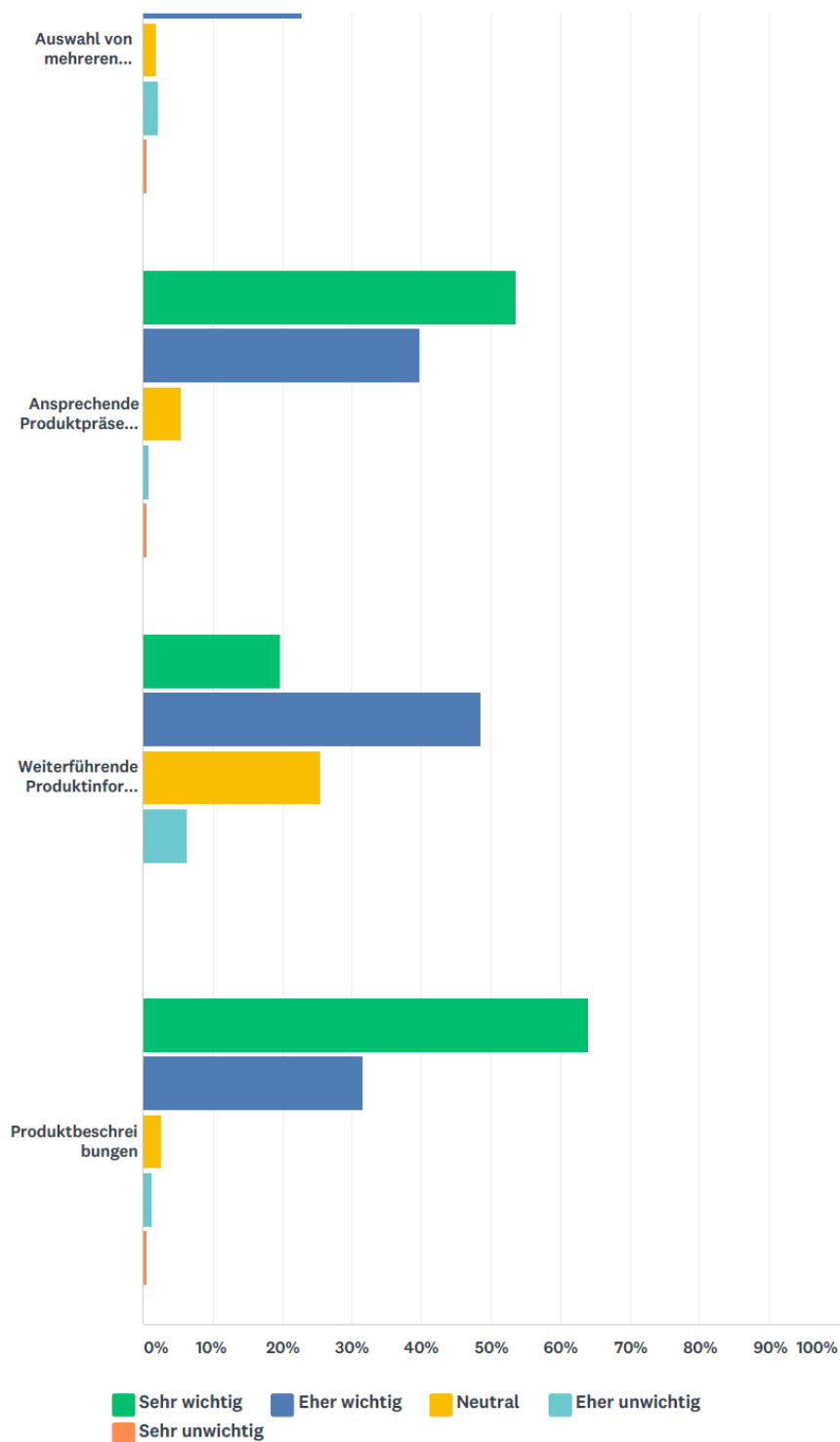01.01.2020 21:16   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kostenlose und einfache Rücksendung, Rabattgutscheine (z.B. Newsletteranmeldung oder Studierendenrabatte)

01.01.2020 21:08   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Große Auswahl

01.01.2020 20:15   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kostenlose Retour

09.12.2019 11:09   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kostenlose Retour

09.12.2019 11:09   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kauf auf Rechnung

06.12.2019 11:56   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Zahlungsmethode

03.12.2019 19:26   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bezahl erfahren

02.12.2019 22:11   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Rechnung

29.11.2019 11:39   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Einfache Lieferadressangabe, insb. die Möglichkeit, direkt eine DHL-Packstation hinterlegen zu können. Außerdem: Viele Zahlungsmittel

29.11.2019 09:55   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bündelung von Artikeln in einer Sendung (bspw. bei Amazon möglich)

29.11.2019 09:32   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Im titel sollten die wichtigsten Punkte und Maße des Artikels stehen, das erleichtert die Suche enorm.

28.11.2019 22:45   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Q7 Wie wichtig sind Ihnen folgende Kriterien bei der Nutzung von Online - Shops

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

Avoidance of returns in e-commerce in Germany

Produktbewertun
gen/...

Produktkategori
e-Seiten /...

Professionelle
Gestaltung d...

Übersichtliche
Startseite

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020
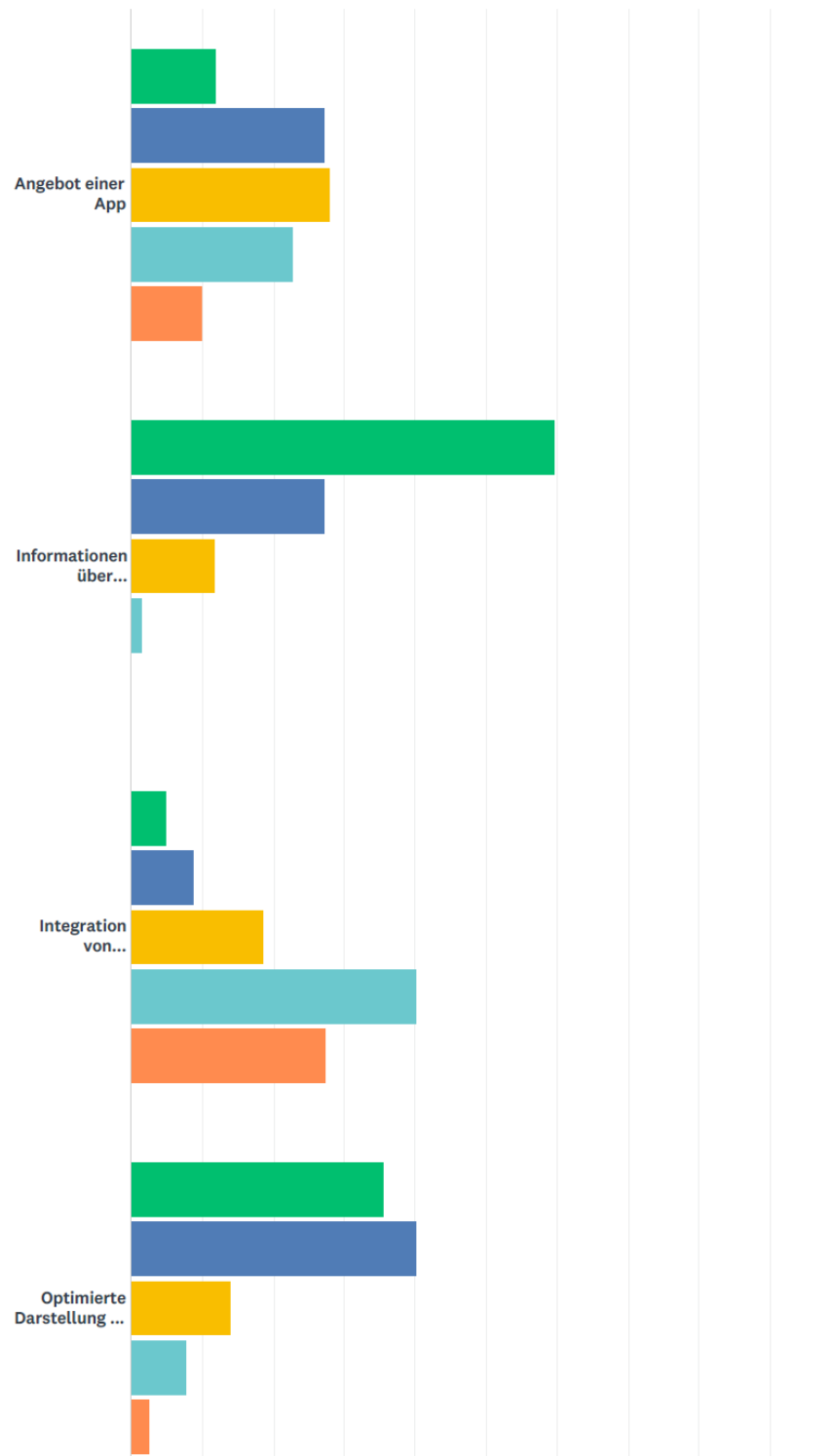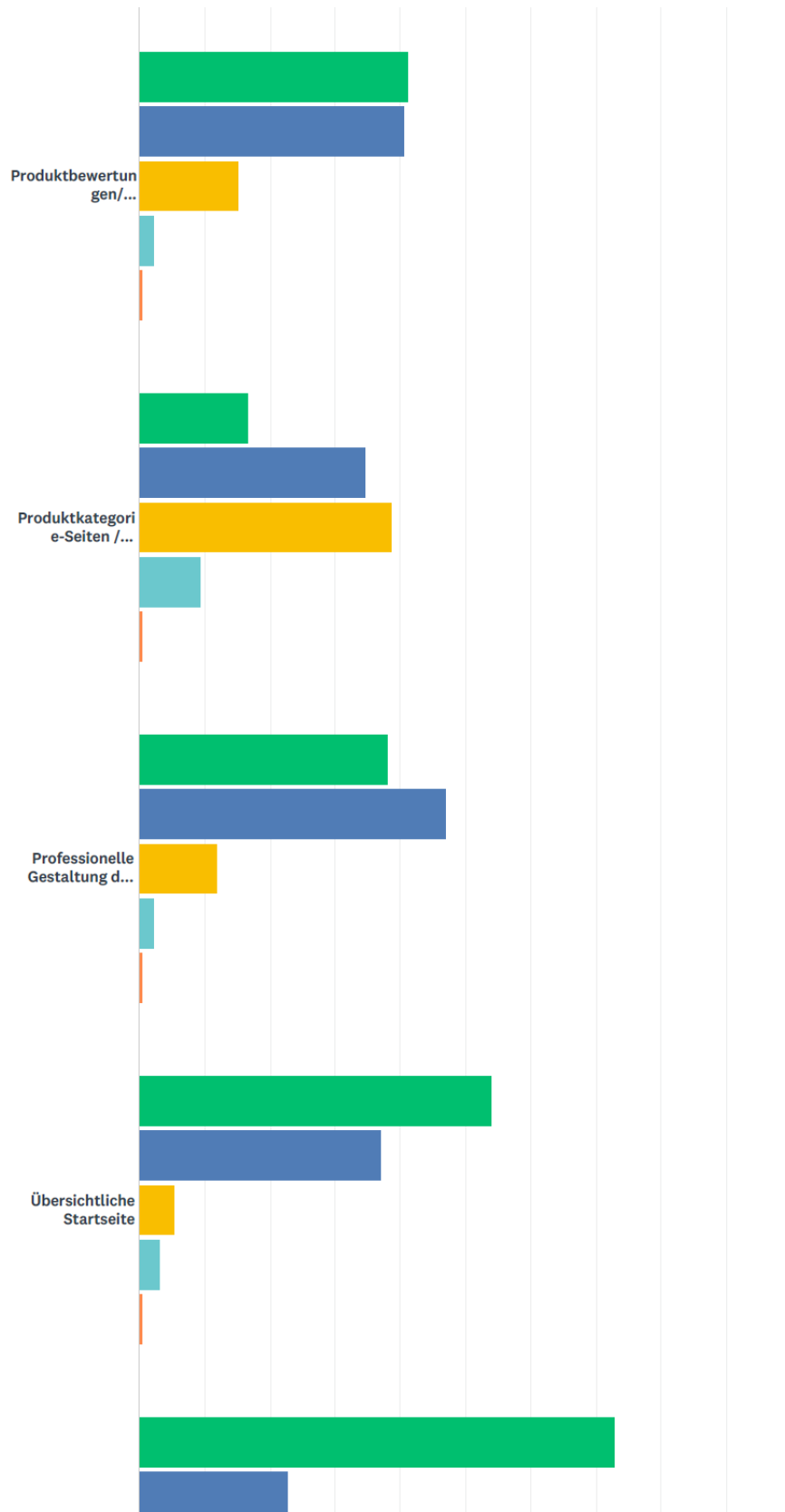
	SEHR WICHTIG	EHER WICHTIG	NEUTRAL	EHER UNWICHTIG	SEHR UNWICHTIG	TOTAL
Angebot einer App	11.92% 46	27.20% 105	27.98% 108	22.80% 88	10.10% 39	386

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Informationen über Versandbedingungen	59.59% 230	27.20% 105	11.66% 45	1.55% 6	0.00% 0	386
Integration von Social-Media-Elementen	4.92% 19	8.81% 34	18.65% 72	40.16% 155	27.46% 106	386
Optimierte Darstellung auf mobilen Endgeräten	35.49% 137	40.16% 155	13.99% 54	7.77% 30	2.59% 10	386
Produktbewertungen/ -empfehlungen anderer Kunden	41.19% 159	40.67% 157	15.28% 59	2.33% 9	0.52% 2	386
Produktkategorie-Seiten / Themenseiten	16.84% 65	34.72% 134	38.60% 149	9.33% 36	0.52% 2	386
Professionelle Gestaltung der Website	38.08% 147	47.15% 182	11.92% 46	2.33% 9	0.52% 2	386
Übersichtliche Startseite	53.89% 208	37.05% 143	5.44% 21	3.11% 12	0.52% 2	386
Auswahl von mehreren Zahlungsmethoden (PayPal, Kreditkarte, Vorkasse etc.)	72.80% 281	22.80% 88	1.81% 7	2.07% 8	0.52% 2	386
Ansprechende Produktpräsentationen	53.51% 206	39.74% 153	5.45% 21	0.78% 3	0.52% 2	385
Weiterführende Produktinformationen	19.74% 76	48.57% 187	25.45% 98	6.23% 24	0.00% 0	385
Produktbeschreibungen	63.97% 245	31.59% 121	2.61% 10	1.31% 5	0.52% 2	383

Q8 Bestellen Sie gerne mehrere Größen/ Arten eines Artikel, wenn Sie sich unsicher sind, welcher der richtige wäre?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
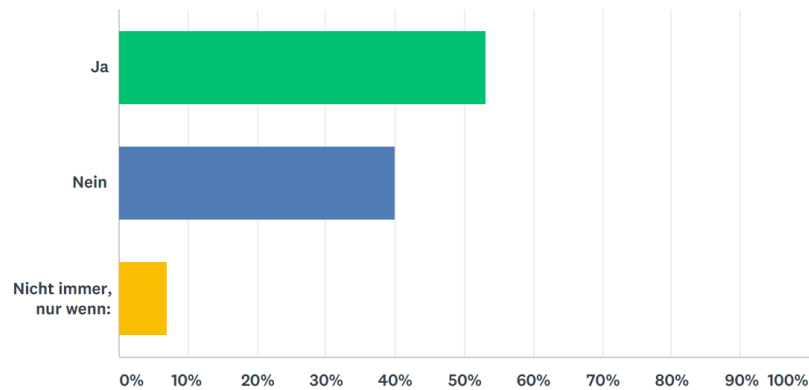
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ja	53.11%	205
Nein	39.90%	154
Nicht immer, nur wenn:	6.99%	27
TOTAL		386

☐ ich mir wirklich unsicher bin		
02.01.2020 12:44	Antworten des Befragten anzeigen	Tags hinzufügen ▼
☐ mir nicht sicher bei der farbe bin		
02.01.2020 10:48	Antworten des Befragten anzeigen	Tags hinzufügen ▼
☐ auswahl farbe		
02.01.2020 10:47	Antworten des Befragten anzeigen	Tags hinzufügen ▼
☐ ich mir unsicher bei der Größe bin		
02.01.2020 10:29	Antworten des Befragten anzeigen	Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bei Kleidung die nicht ausreichend beschrieben wurde

02.01.2020 10:29   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

-

02.01.2020 10:11   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

kleidung für besonderen moment muss passen

02.01.2020 10:11   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

wenn ich schnell etwas benötige

01.01.2020 18:17   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Schuhe

01.01.2020 18:17   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Jacken

01.01.2020 18:06   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kleidung

01.01.2020 18:06   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

schnell benötigt

01.01.2020 17:51   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

unsicher

01.01.2020 17:51   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Ich mir nicht 100% sicher bin

12.12.2019 23:54   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

kostenloser Versand & Rückversand möglich ist

09.12.2019 17:30   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kleidung, Schuhe

09.12.2019 09:48   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

ich sonst nicht viel mitbestelle

06.12.2019 11:26   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Der Artikel in Zusammenhang mit einem wichtigen Termin steht

30.11.2019 20:17   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Es sein muss

30.11.2019 07:20   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Es sich um Kleidung & Schuhe handelt

29.11.2019 17:41   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Häufig beim Bestellung von Kleidern wenn die richtige Größe durch fehlende Größentabellen nicht ersichtlich ist

29.11.2019 08:48   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Ich bestelle so gut wie nie Kleidung im Internet

28.11.2019 22:45   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Ich den Artikel wirklich in einem kurzen Zeitraum dringend brauche und ich durch den Zeitdruck keine Alternative mehr habe

28.11.2019 21:05   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nicht genügend Information: welche Größe trägt das Model, Größentabelle, Kundenbewertung, Information „fällt eine Nummer größer/kleiner aus"

28.11.2019 20:24   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Keine Größentabellen bzw. Keine Angabe welche Größe das Model trägt

28.11.2019 19:22   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

es Kleidung ist

28.11.2019 13:57   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

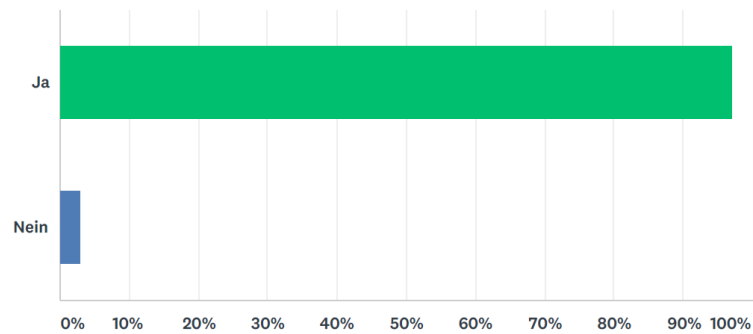Die Größe nicht genau beschrieben wurde

28.11.2019 12:41   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Q9 Haben Sie schon einmal eine Bestellung zurückgeschickt?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ja	97.15%	375
Nein	2.85%	11
TOTAL		386

Q10 Wenn ja, wieviel Prozent Ihrer Bestellungen schicken Sie wieder zurück? (Bei Nein bitte 0% wählen)

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
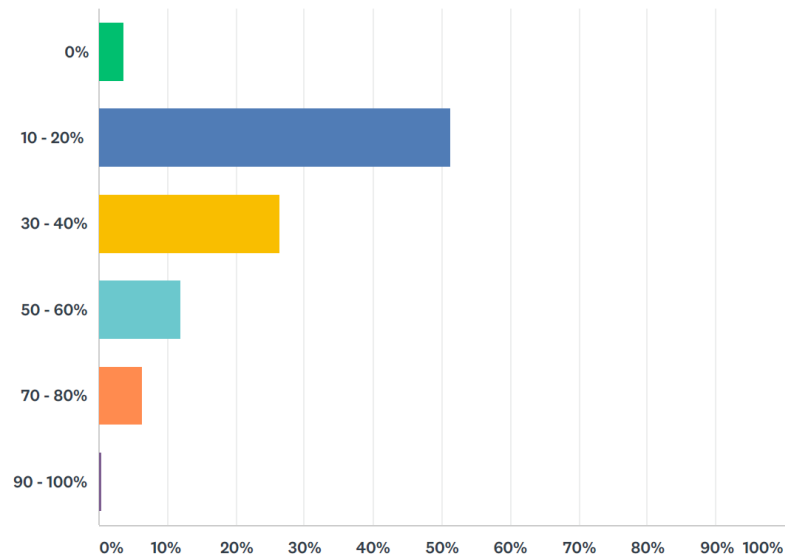
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0%	3.63%	14
10 - 20%	51.30%	198
30 - 40%	26.42%	102
50 - 60%	11.92%	46
70 - 80%	6.22%	24
90 - 100%	0.52%	2
TOTAL		386

AERES
HOGESCHOOL

Q11 Warum haben Sie schon einmal einen Artikel zurückgesendet?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
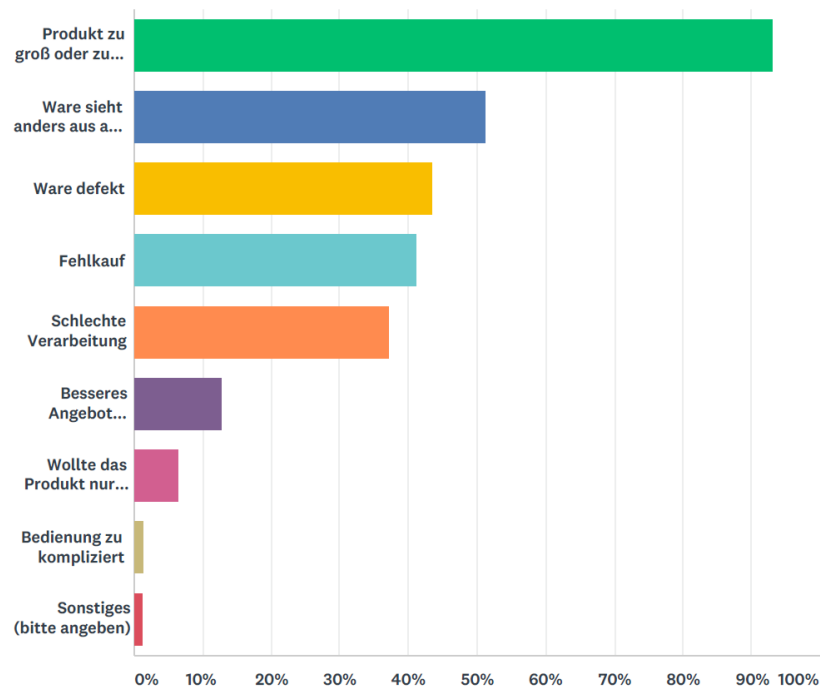
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Produkt zu groß oder zu klein	93.01%	359
Ware sieht anders aus als beschrieben	51.30%	198
Ware defekt	43.52%	168
Fehlkauf	41.19%	159
Schlechte Verarbeitung	37.31%	144
Besseres Angebot entdeckt	12.69%	49
Wollte das Produkt nur anschauen	6.48%	25
Bedienung zu kompliziert	1.55%	6
Sonstiges (bitte angeben)	1.30%	5
Total Respondents: 386		

☐ habe nichts zurückgeschickt bisher

02.01.2020 07:54   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

☐ Mehrere Artikel zur Auswahl bestellt

06.12.2019 22:19   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

☐ Noch nie

28.11.2019 21:17   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

☐ Falsches Produkt wurde versendet

28.11.2019 21:05   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼
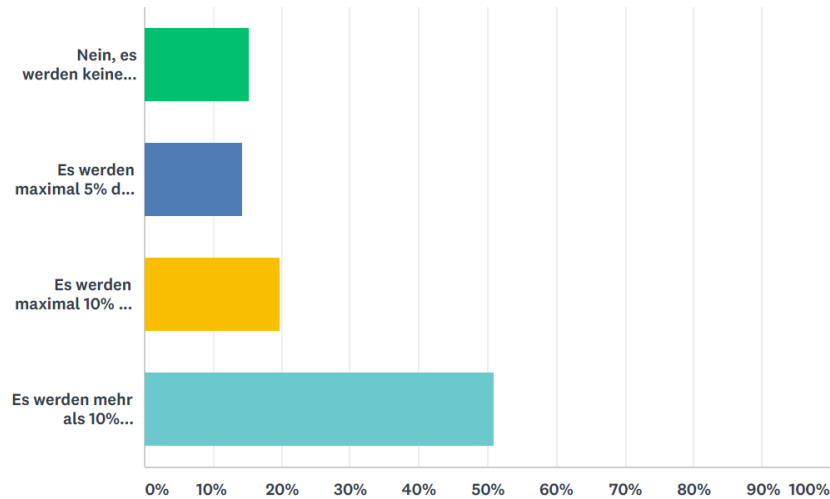
Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Nicht

28.11.2019 14:42

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Q12 Denken Sie, dass retournierte Ware vernichtet wird?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Nein, es werden keine Artikel vernichtet	15.28%	59
Es werden maximal 5% der Artikel vernichtet	14.25%	55
Es werden maximal 10% der Artikel vernichtet	19.69%	76
Es werden mehr als 10% vernichtet	50.78%	196
TOTAL		386

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Q13 Würden Sie einer der folgenden Punkte motivieren, um den Artikel doch nicht zu retournieren?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Avoidance of returns in e-commerce in Germany

Erhebung von Rücksendegeb...

Hinweis auf Umweltschäden

Eine persönliche...

Rabatt durch ein Posting ...

Das Nicht-Beileg...

Rabatt auf

Jana Mürdter
Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

Avoidance of returns in e-commerce in Germany
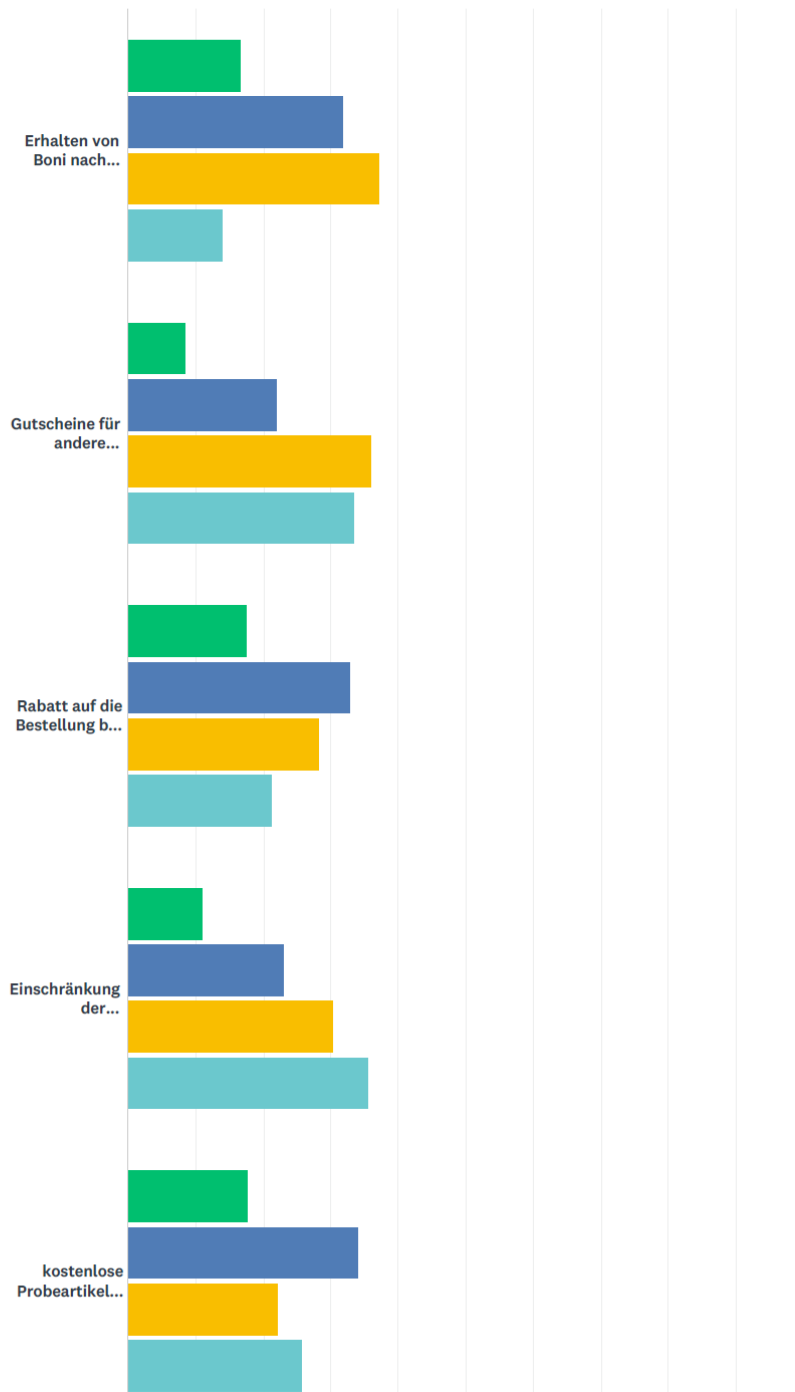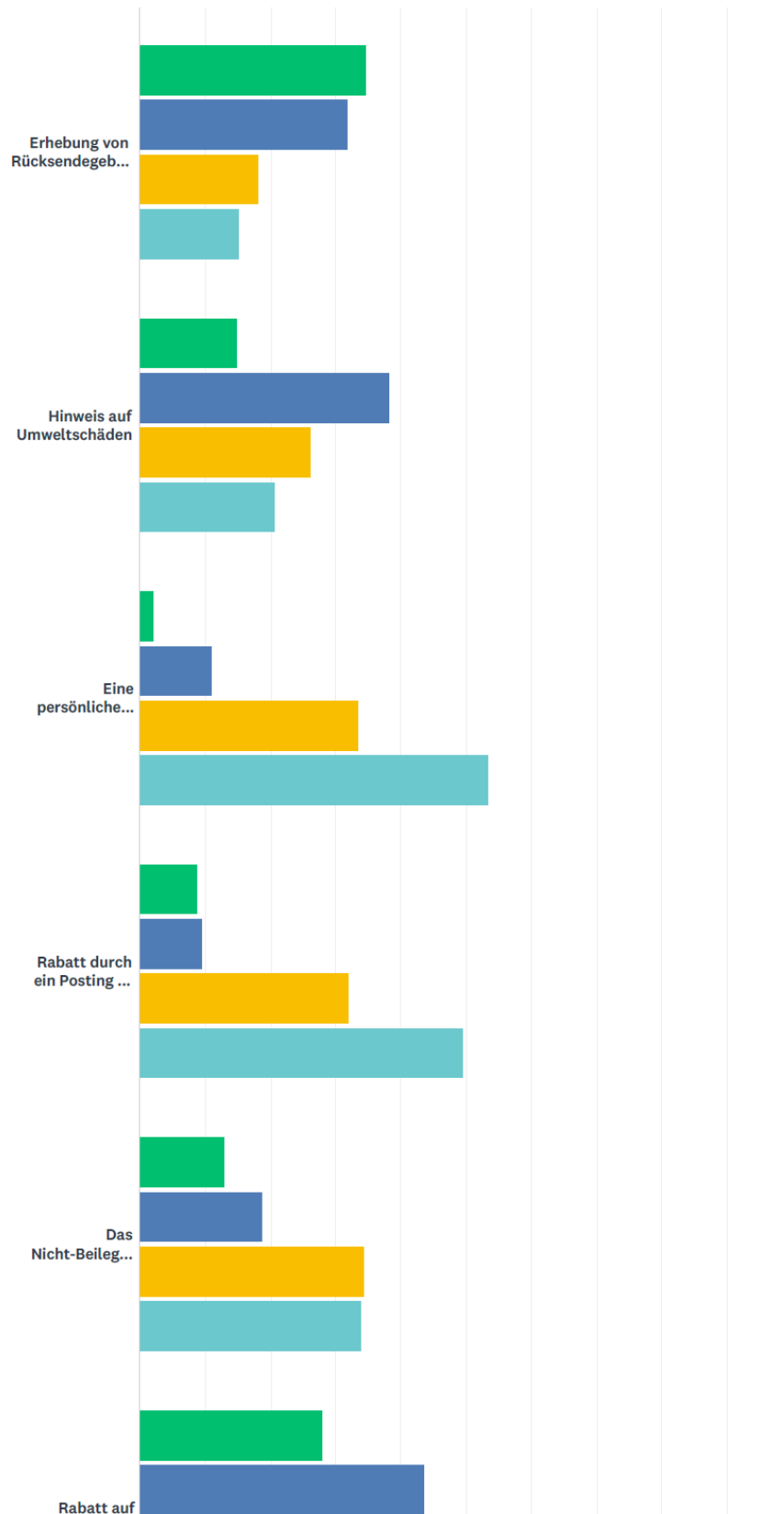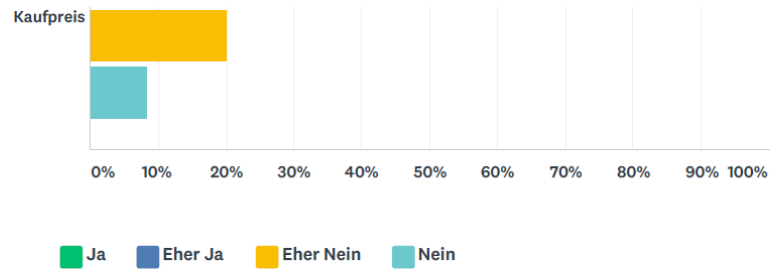
|	JA	EHER JA	EHER NEIN	NEIN	TOTAL
Erhalten von Boni nach Ablauf der Widerrufsfrist, welche beim nächsten Einkauf verwendet werden können	16.84% 65	31.87% 123	37.31% 144	13.99% 54	386
Gutscheine für andere Online-Shops nach Ablauf der Widerrufsfrist	8.55% 33	22.02% 85	36.01% 139	33.42% 129	386
Rabatt auf die Bestellung bei der Verwendung einer bestimmten Zahlungsmethode (wie z.B. Vorkasse)	17.62% 68	32.90% 127	28.24% 109	21.24% 82	386
Einschränkung der Zahlungsmöglichkeiten bei einer hohen Anzahl an Retouren	11.14% 43	23.06% 89	30.31% 117	35.49% 137	386
kostenlose Probeartikel beim Verzicht auf die Retoure	17.88% 69	34.20% 132	22.28% 86	25.65% 99	386
Erhebung von Rücksendegebühren	34.72% 134	31.87% 123	18.13% 70	15.28% 59	386
Hinweis auf Umweltschäden	14.77% 57	38.34% 148	26.17% 101	20.73% 80	386
Eine persönliche Grußkarte die der Bestellung beiliegt als kleine Aufmerksamkeit	2.08% 8	11.17% 43	33.51% 129	53.25% 205	385
Rabatt durch ein Posting des Online-Shops auf Social Media	8.85% 34	9.64% 37	32.03% 123	49.48% 190	384
Das Nicht-Beilegen eines Retourenklebers (extra Aufwand durch Kontakt mit Kundenservice)	13.02% 50	18.75% 72	34.38% 132	33.85% 130	384
Rabatt auf Kaufpreis	27.94% 107	43.60% 167	20.10% 77	8.36% 32	383

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Q14 Würden Sie bei einem Online-Shop nochmal einkaufen, wenn es Probleme bei der Rücksendung gab?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
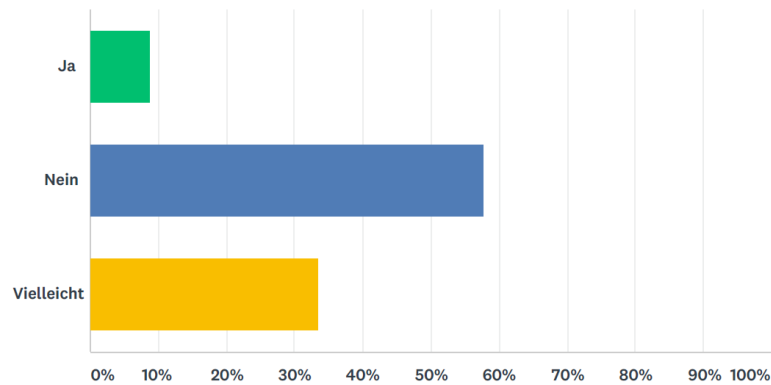
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ja	8.81%	34
Nein	57.77%	223
Vielleicht	33.42%	129
TOTAL		386

Q15 Wäre das selbst Bezahlen der Rücksendekosten ein Grund für Sie, um überhaupt nicht einzukaufen bei einem Online-Shop?

Answered: 386   Skipped: 0
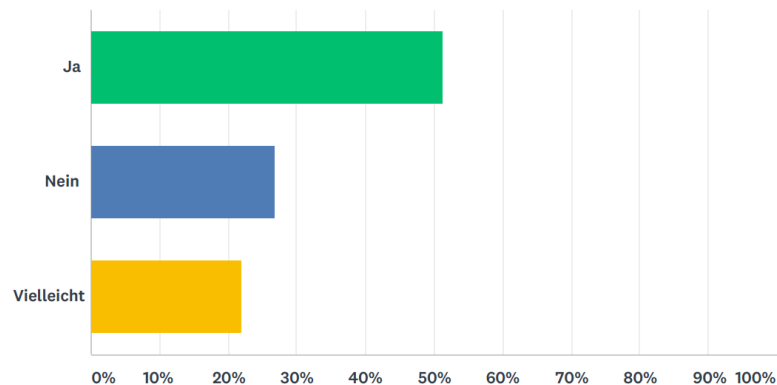
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ja	51.30%	198
Nein	26.68%	103
Vielleicht	22.02%	85
TOTAL		386

Q16 Haben Sie selbst noch Ideen oder Wünsche, was Sie motivieren würde, die Bestellung nicht zurück zu schicken?

Answered: 70   Skipped: 316

☐ Ich schicke nur Klamotten wieder zurück. Wenn sie nunmal nicht passen, dann kann kaum ein Anreiz genug sein, um die Ware nicht wieder zurückzuschicken - was nützen mir Klamotten, die nicht passen bzw. nicht der Produktbeschreibung entsprechen ?!

02.01.2020 20:36   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

☐ Nein

02.01.2020 20:01   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

☐ Wenn die Größenangaben wirklich stimmen würden. Bei Zalando hat mir bis jetzt nichts gepasst und die Kleidung hatte oft einen anderen Schnitt als auf den Fotos.

02.01.2020 15:09   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

☐ Nein

02.01.2020 11:09   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

nein

01.01.2020 21:16

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Ware wird wenige Tage nach Kauf günstiger --> Angebot innerhalb Rücksendefrist den günstigsten Kaufpreis anzubieten (Differenz wird erstattet); so muss ich die Ware zurücksenden und neu bestellen; kam zuletzt bei Black Friday Week vor

01.01.2020 21:08

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Eventuell bei einer aufrichtigen persönlichen Entschuldigung des Herstellers

01.01.2020 20:32

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bonuskonto, Treuepunkte bei Behalten des Artikels

01.01.2020 20:30

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bei Kleidung definitiv bessere Größenangaben (Bzw korrekte cm-Angaben und Positionen des Messens)

01.01.2020 20:25

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Gute Artikelbescheibungen, sodass keine Fehlentscheidungen passieren

01.01.2020 20:15

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

-

29.12.2019 11:45

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Vor allem bei Kleidung mehr Informationen geben, vielleicht das Kleidungsstück an 2 oder mehr verschiedenen Models sehen können. Bessere Fotos die man vergrößern kann, sodass man die Passform und Qualität des Produktes besser einschätzen kann. Und Kundenbewertungen natürlich

wenn mir ein Teil nicht passt, bleibt mir nichts anderes übrig, als es zurück zu schicken. Da ich immer mehr zur Auswahl bestelle, bleibt eine Retoure somit obligatorisch

29.12.2019 10:06

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

24.12.2019 08:18

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

-

23.12.2019 19:24

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

22.12.2019 12:27

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

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nein

20.12.2019 10:24

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Nein

19.12.2019 14:54

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Soll nicht ein Gesetz verabschiedet werden, welches das retournieren einschränkt?

19.12.2019 10:25

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

anderweitige Nutzung der Produkte möglich

18.12.2019 09:42

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Gutschein

16.12.2019 13:47

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Gutschein

16.12.2019 13:46

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

bei Bekleidung eine genaue Beschreibung der Größe

14.12.2019 20:22

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Bessere Beschreibung der Artiker, Elektrogeräte besser verpacken, damit diese beim Transport nicht beschädigt werden

12.12.2019 23:54

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

nein

10.12.2019 08:27

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Nein

09.12.2019 12:19

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Produkte entsprechen den Bildern auf der Website --> keinen Grund für Rückgabe

09.12.2019 11:09

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

Produkte entsprechen den Bildern auf der Website --> keinen Grund für Rückgabe

09.12.2019 11:09

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▾

L

nein

09.12.2019 09:48

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

bessere Angaben auf der Website, um Fehlkäufe zu vermeiden. Beispielsweise Kleidung an mehreren Models zeigen, die unterschiedliche Figuren haben. Die Video Funktion hilft auch immer Kleidung auszusortieren, weil man erkennen kann, was einem nicht passen/stehen wird oder wo die Verarbeitung nicht gut zu sein scheint.

06.12.2019 11:26

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

06.12.2019 09:56

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

06.12.2019 09:56

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Kaufpreiserstattung

04.12.2019 18:47

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Gutschein bzw. Rabattcode

01.12.2019 19:21

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Auf diese Frage würde mir leider nichts einfallen, was mich daran hindern würde etwas nicht zurück zu senden.

30.11.2019 15:14

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

30.11.2019 11:40

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

29.11.2019 18:35

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

29.11.2019 18:13

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

29.11.2019 14:25

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

Statt rücksenden -> spenden ? Und 90% des kaufpreises zurück ..

29.11.2019 11:47

Antworten des Befragten anzeigen Tags hinzufügen ▼

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Nein

29.11.2019 11:39   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

29.11.2019 09:53   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

.

29.11.2019 09:51   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Wenn es keine Beanstandungen gibt :D

29.11.2019 09:34   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Wenn man Rabatt auf Produkte bekommt die nicht ganz passen

29.11.2019 09:25   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bilder von der Art wie sie zurück geschickt werden und dann vernichtet

29.11.2019 09:23   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Wenn Produkt nicht passt soll es billiger werden

29.11.2019 09:17   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

wenn nicht defekt oder voller Fehlkauf, führen die oberen Dinge sicherlich häufig dazu, dass man das Rücksenden überdenken würde. Zusätzlich ist eine detaillierte Produktvorstellung Voraussetzung dafür, dass es nicht zu derartigen Fehlkäufen kommt.

29.11.2019 09:11   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

29.11.2019 08:58   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Sperren des kundenkontos bei zu vielen Retouren.

29.11.2019 08:48   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Ehrliche und sehr gute Produktbeschreibung. Vergleichstabellen mit anderen Artikeln Videos die nicht gefotoshopt sind, sodass man die echte Ware sieht

28.11.2019 23:45   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

28.11.2019 23:07   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

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Nein

28.11.2019 23:01   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

28.11.2019 22:41   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

-geringer Warenwert

28.11.2019 22:34   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

28.11.2019 22:17   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

ne man sry

28.11.2019 22:11   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Im Laden anprobieren

28.11.2019 22:01   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Im Laden abgeben

28.11.2019 21:55   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Bei Kleidung mehrere Bilder von Models in verschiedenen Konfektionsgrössen

28.11.2019 21:44   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Da bin ich ehrlich. Wenn das Produkt nicht wie beschrieben ist oder zu groß oder zu klein ich schicke ich es zurück, da ich nichts damit anfangen kann

28.11.2019 21:42   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Wenn vor verbindlicher Bestellung eine Information erscheint, welche darauf hinweist was mit der retournierten Ware geschieht (Vernichtung, nochmalige Verwendung, daraus entstehende Aufwände/Schäden z.B.: Klima, etc)

28.11.2019 20:23   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Steht bei Bestellung der Ware, dass die Ware beim retournieren vernichtet wird, würde ich diese nicht zurück schicken.

28.11.2019 20:21   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Umwelt Gedanke und Vernichtung des Produktes

28.11.2019 18:01   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

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Nein

28.11.2019 15:12   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

28.11.2019 14:50   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nein

28.11.2019 14:04   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Nur, wenn ich diesen nicht bezahlen müsste. Ich würde diesen dann weiter verschenken.

28.11.2019 13:54   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

Davor gut genug informiert sein dass man nichts zurück schicken muss

28.11.2019 13:39   Antworten des Befragten anzeigen   Tags hinzufügen ▼

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Appendix 7 Answers Interview

1) Retourenprozess im Allgemeinen
   - Reklamation
     - o 1 Variante: Verbaut (TKD)
     - o 2 Variante: Ware wurde erst in Empfang genommen (Vertrieb)
   - 2 Variante: Reklamation kommt an über Vertrieb oder Online-Shop, Beschreibung Problem, Retoure wird angelegt im System, Abholung wird veranlasst, Retoure wird abgeholt bei Küchenstudio (mit S
   - pülen etwas komplizierter, kann auch über Retourenschein aber hauptsächlich über Spedition –> gesammelt und zurückgeschickt
   - Anlieferung Retoure
   - Anhand des Auftragsgrund wird abgeglichen was vorliegt
   - Informationen werden an Innendienst weitergeleitet
   - Daraus resultiert eine Gutschriftserstellung

2) Kosten einer Retoure pro Artikel?
   a. AGB BLANCO schauen Rückholkosten (50 % Gutschrift)
   b. Darf nicht rausgegeben werden

3) Wieviel Artikel erhält BLANCO pro Woche?
   a. Darf nicht rausgegeben werden

4) Die meisten Gründe der Retoure?
   a. Falsche oder zu viel Ware, Storno, Mehrfachbestellungen am häufigsten fast die Hälfte (43 Prozent) → an der Qualität liegt es nicht
      i. 80% Gutschrift (SCHAUEN AGBS SONST NICHT SCHREIBEN!!)
      ii. Amazon wieviel Paletten??
   b. Retoure zur Klärung (Produktmangel) nur selten der Fall
   c. Transportschäden auch unter 10 Prozent
   d. Alle anderen Gründe unter 5 Prozent (Fehler von Blanco, Eingabefehler etc.)
   e. Technischer Kundendienst nachdem Spüle schon verbaut und schaden nach Zeit hat. Kunden rufen an und begutachten schaden, Aufträge laufen über BLANCO und werden durch externe Küchenbauer verarbeitet
   f. Storno → Spüle den eigentlichen Ersatz verbaut werden sollte muss nicht verbaut werden da nur ein Putzfehler vorhanden ist, spüle kommt wieder zurück
   g. Mischbatterien werden auch kaputt zurückgenommen, da der Reklamationsgrund geprüft werden muss → Verbesserung der Teile
   h. Mischbatterien kritisches Produkt durch viele Kleinteile und Technik welche schnell kaputt gehen → Schadensersatz
   i.

5) Wiederverwertbarkeit der Retouren?
   a. Hoher Anteil an Wiederverwertbarkeit: Viele Artikel falsch bestellt, Fehler von BLANCO etc.
   b. Normale Rücksendequote 13 Prozent
   c. Knapp 70 können wiederverwendet werden

6) Wie viele müssen neu aufbereitet werden, wie viele weggeschmissen werden
   a. Zweite Wahl nicht möglich und wird nicht gemacht
   b. Neuware oder nicht mehr wieder verwertbar

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7) Wird viel ohne Kontrolle einfach weggeschmissen?
   a. Alles wird kontrolliert

8) Welcher Maßnahmen trifft BLANCO um Retouren zu vermeiden?

   Mögliche Antworten:

   1. Detaillierte Produktbeschreibung und genaue Produktdarstellung
      a. Maße werden angegeben
      b. Detaillierte Zeichnungen und Produktbeileger
      c. Detaillierte Materialeigenschaften und Funktionsweise
   2. Professionelle Verpackung zum Schutz vor Beschädigungen
      a. Durch EPS und professionelle Verpackung Schutz vor Beschädigung
      b. Analyse der Transportunternehmen in Form von TS Schadensquote
      c. Analyse bezüglich Vermeidung Transportschäden
   3. Qualitätssicherung des Produkts vor dem Versand
   4. Kurze Lieferzeit
   5. Angebot von Hilfestellungen (z.B. Telefon Hotline)
      a. Telefon Hotline TDK, Chat über TKD?
   6. Produktbewertungen durch Käufer (z.B. Erfahrungsberichte)
      a. Verschieden Internet Portale mit Produktbewertungen

9) Warum können manche Retouren nicht verhindert werden?
   a. Verbraucherverhalten → Kunde entscheidet ob das Produkt gefällt oder nicht bei Anlieferung, kann nicht vermieden werden
   b. Klare Produktinformation, stetige Verbesserung der Beschreibungen und Bilder
   c. Informationen durch zwischenstellen wie Küchenstudios etc. weitergeben
   d. Weitergabe von Farbmustern an Küchenstudios zur Unterstützung
10) Verbesserung der Website eine Option?
   a. Stetige Verbesserung der Website, Zeichnungen werden detaillierteren Maßangaben
   b. WICHTIG: Informative Montageanleitung, Produktbeileger als auch Videos zur Hilfe
   c. YouTube: Bereitstellung von Videos bezüglich Reinigung und Installation
   d. Kundeninfo über YouTube: Spülen Reinigung
11) Welche Art von Kunden senden die meisten Artikel zurück?
   a. Handwerker bestellen richtig, Laien, die sich nicht gut genug mit den Spülen beschäftigen, technisches Knowhow sehr wichtig bei der Bestellung von Spülen
   b. Selbstüberschätzung der Kunden

- Rezensionen sehr wichtig, heutzutage Unternehmen welche speziellen Rezensionen schreiben, Rezensionen fake deswegen öfters mit beschäftigen.
- BLANCO: Bis zu 50 Prozent Gutschrift bei Transportschäden
- Zurückverfolgen der Kundendaten über bildnachweis und Lieferetikett um zu schauen ob wahrheitsgetreu -> systematisch wird aussortiert ob MA vielleicht nicht nochmal das gleiche Foto schickt etc.
- Ohne Retoure geht Verkauf nicht, da Menschen ohne Retourmöglichkeit nicht einkaufen
- Villeroy und Bosch AGB: 15 Prozent warenwert für Retouren Verarbeitung werden eingezogen
- WMF holt nur Österreich Deutschland Schweiz zurück
- FRANKE WMF villeroy etc. AGBs anschauen was als Retoure zurückgenommen wird.
- Privatkunden werden durch e-Commerce immer größer

LVI

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Oct. 19 – Jan 2020

- Bielmaier: direkter Wettbewerber (online Shop für Küchen)

WICHTIG: Ohne Retoure kein Umsatz,

völlig wertneutral wird über die Retoure entschieden → höhere Kundenzufriedenheit wichtig

detaillierte Fehleranalyse über die Retoure, wodurch Fehler analysiert und abgestellt werden können, was die Produkte stets besser macht

Für BLANCO positiv