

Online shopping- healthcare products have the best chances of market success

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Results of the Online Shopping Survey 2004 (OSS)

Munich/Wiesbaden, 24 May 2004 - Online sales of drugs, vitamins and tonics are set to rise sharply. Of the total of 29 product groups surveyed in terms of online sales, healthcare products have the greatest market potential. This is one of the key findings of the Online Shopping Survey 2004, a joint survey by market research companies ENIGMA GfK and TNS Infratest.

In 2003, only 830,000 Internet users actually bought prescription and non-prescription drugs, tonics and vitamin products online, spending an average of about EUR 40 each. However, over 5 million consumers could imagine ordering health-promoting products online in future.

Suppliers of these kinds of products can expect to double or even triple growth rates over the next few years. This development has been aided by the Gesetz zur Modernisierung der gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung (GMG - German Health Service Reform Act), which clarified the legal parameters for online pharmacies in Germany at the beginning of 2004. Consumers no longer have to worry about being in a legal grey area but can take full - legal - advantage of the attractive offers on the Internet.

Increasing interest in beauty products

The Internet also offers extensive potential sales growth for facial and body care products, toiletries and cosmetics. Whereas last year, 1.8 million Internet users were already ordering their skincare products online, a further 4.9 million people could imagine doing so in future. 1.7 million consumers purchased their cosmetics and perfume online in 2003, but there is a potential market of 4.5 million additional e-shoppers in this segment.

Internet sales of washing machines and TVs

German consumers are increasingly turning to the Internet for their electronic appliances and entertainment electronics. In 2003, 1.4 million consumers bought their large domestic appliances, such as washing machines and dishwashers, online. For this segment, there is also additional purchasing potential of 3.7 million consumers. Internet sales of TVs, video recorders and hi-fis are likely to grow by an even greater margin. While in 2003, 2.9 million users ordered their entertainment electronics via the web, a further 6.2 million German consumers could imagine doing so in future.

Good prospects for providers in growth segments

For those online traders not restricted to the e-commerce "classics" such as books, CDs and clothing, the growth categories of electronic retail offer promising opportunities. However, in future, manufacturers will also have to consider intelligent solutions for the storage and handling of bulky or fragile goods.

The survey

The Online Shopping Survey (OSS) is carried out jointly by ENIGMA GfK and TNS Infratest. In January and February 2004, a total of 1,035 German Internet users aged between 14 and 69 were asked via telephone about Internet usage, the role of the Internet when it comes to shopping for 29 product and services segments and online banking. The full survey can be ordered from the contacts below at a price of EUR 5,000 net.

ENIGMA GfK

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GfK Group

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