

Growing with the internet – from Shop to Facebook

19. August 2010. When DEICHMANN started its online shop in 2000, it was regarded as a pioneering venture by the industry. Shoes on the internet? This was definitely new territory. But Europe's largest shoe retailer was not afraid to tread new paths; it knew the ropes of experiments. As early as the 80ies, DEICHMANN were the first to introduce a self-service system in shoe retailing, which was initially the subject of some ridicule by the competition, but was very quickly accepted by their customers.

So, why not also use the internet? Many providers have tried their luck in the World Wide Web over the past ten years – and quite a number of them have also disappeared into digital oblivion again. The DEICHMANN online shop has developed continuously because the fast medium internet requires constant adjustments. In August, following an extensive "renovation", the DEICHMANN homepage and online shop will move into a new virtual dimension.

Meanwhile, shoe shopping on the internet is no longer anything special – however, there is a certain aspect to DEICHMANN, which is quite unique. "Nobody in Germany can offer his customers an online shop and 1,100 branches at the same time", explains Heinrich Deichmann, Chairman of the Board of Directors of DEICHMANN SE. This has several advantages for the customer. He is able to return shoes he has ordered online in a branch or have them collected free of charge by a courier. Or if a branch does not have the shoe he wanted to buy in his size, he can order it online by entering the article number. This is a special advantage for example in case of oversized and undersized shoes, which are sold without surcharge.

The online shop has been completely overhauled. The advantage for the user: more comfortable search functions, more payment options, 360 degree views for many models and above all a greater selection. The online shop now offers the complete range, which is available in our branches. "In doing so, the online shop has now drawn level with our stationary trade" says Heinrich Deichmann.

More web activities also at international level – group turnover positive

However, the DEICHMANN Group does not only take proactive internet steps in Germany: a shop has also been installed in Switzerland and the Netherlands will join the Group's online activities in autumn 2010. Other countries will follow. "Obviously, the lion share of our turnover will still be generated by the stationary trade, but the internet plays an increasingly important role as a supplementary service, a fact we cannot ignore", explains Heinrich Deichmann the strategic direction of the online activities.

In 2009, DEICHMANN sold 138 million pairs of shoes in Europe and the USA – of those about 70 million in Germany – making it Europe's market leader. Last year, the Group's turnover rose by nine percent to Euro 3.4 billion. And in the current year too, turnover exceeded expectations. The first DEICHMANN branch in Spain was opened in March. As a result, the Group has spread its activities to 20 countries. A branch in Serbia will open in 2011.

Multimedia stage and social media

Users attach the same importance to the information and entertainment element as they do to shopping online. The redesign of the DEICHMANN homepage is thereby a vital element. It has been expanded to create a stage, where different topics become multimedia features: from the new advertising campaign to current fashion tips. At the same time, www.deichmann.com provides information on corporate philosophy and consumer issues. The platform will be international and eventually available in 24 languages.

Increasingly important features of DEICHMANN's activities are the so-called social networks or social media to get customers and those who are interested in fashion not only interested in their own collection but to inform them also about the general trends of the season. This information is provided in form of a fashion blog, which not only looks behind the celebrity and fashion scene, but also gives DEICHMANN designers and trend scouts their say. "Customers are used to visit our shops and quickly find the latest trends at affordable prices; we want to give them an online fashion platform, where they can find concrete recommendations. That way, we are contributing to the democratisation of fashion. Our aim is to make lifestyle affordable for everybody", commented Heinrich Deichmann at the start of the new shop.

Shoe fun for the online clique

Users can share their passion for shoes with others on the net. Functions, such as "tell-a-friend" make this possible. Anyone, who has discovered an interesting topic or a special shoe, can recommend it to others. Apart from that one can add a shoe or a video or an article about an interesting fashion topic to one's own profile on Facebook, the world's largest social network to make and maintain friendships on the internet. Combined with the matching outfit, the new style is directly presented to the new online clique. And anybody who wants to can also become member of a special DEICHMANN fashion community on Facebook.

Anybody who interested in getting regular individual information, can register for a personal email newsletter, which according to requirements will focus on the areas ladies, men's, children's or sport shoes. That way, everybody gets exactly the news he or she is interested in.

Deichmann Kid's World

Already available since 2006 is the online portal www.deichmann-kinderwelt.de, which has made a name for itself among parents seeking advice. The portal also gets a new "coat of paint" within the scope of the relaunch in August.

Information for the editors:

You will find a ca. four-minute long video und <http://relaunch.deichmann-presseservice.de>, which will introduce you to the new DEICHMANN website. Placing it on your portal is free of copyright. Accompanying picture material is also available under this link.

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