

Prof. Dr. Gerrit Heinemann, Mönchengladbach

Survival strategies for inner-city retail

An old business rule for innovations said: wait until others have learned the hard way, and then jump in. But if you wait too long, you can hardly catch up. The race is not determined by the competitors (who are also waiting), but by the customer. The digital revolution is customer-driven, and has been turning every industry upside down since the coronavirus pandemic at the latest. Undoubtedly, retail, which is already directly affected by digitisation, has led the way. Not only is the proportion of online purchases increasing but stationary purchases are also being prepared more and more online. Will everything be online now? And what effect does the changed buyer behaviour actually have on the various sectors, trade structures, and on inner cities? One thing is clear: companies that still work without an inventory management system, whose addresses are not on Google Maps, or that make a fuss when customers wish to exchange goods, will lose the most important thing – their customers.

Prof. Dr. Gerrit Heinemann is a proven trade expert and one of the leading e-commerce researchers in the German-speaking world. He heads the eWeb Research Center at the Hochschule Niederrhein university of applied sciences, where his focus is on digital purchasing behaviour. He also has twenty years of trading experience.