

Research Report on Chinese Mail-order Industry, 2009-2010

<https://marketpublishers.com/r/R6C18D212D2EN.html>

Date: September 2009

Pages: 60

Price: US\$ 2,400.00 (Single User License)

ID: R6C18D212D2EN

Abstracts

In developed countries, the mail-order industry has a history of hundreds of years. In China, it has been in development for more than ten years. By the end of 2008, the market scale of mail order exceeded RMB 10 billion.

Catalog mail order is the earliest sales pattern in Chinese non-store retail industry. In 1993 the first catalog mail-order enterprise Xiaokang.com entered Chinese market. Later mail-order enterprises such as Mecoxlane, Bertelsmann entered domestic retail market. All of these enterprises experience a long process before being accepted.

Non-store sale (Non-fixed sales-spot) refers to the direct sale of products and services from producers or distributors to consumers without stores. It is a modern marketing pattern in social economy. It coordinates with the demand of consumers and the advancement of technology. Non-store sale includes mail order, online shopping, TV shopping, vending machine sale and teleshopping.

The mail-order industry has inherent advantages compared with traditional physical stores such as department store, supermarket chain, general merchandise store (GMS), convenience store (CVS), etc. Mail order is not restricted by regions. Many links from production to sale are eliminated to decrease operation and transaction costs. This brings a win-win situation for consumers and retailers.

With the development of Chinese logistics industry, delivery time of mail order is shortened. Meanwhile, after service is improved because of the progress in telecommunication technology. All these make consumers more satisfied with mail order. Though internet is popular at present, mail order is highly accepted because of its directness and high arrival rate. New sales patterns are being developed in the mail-

order industry. Internet can also be applied for the marketing of mail order.

Over time hot products in Chinese mail-order industry shift from new or peculiar products to clothes, books and audiovisual products, etc.

Though impacted by online shopping, mail order in China still displays great development potential. This is because most consumers find mail-order catalog is very convenient; meanwhile most of them do not know how to use internet. For consumers living in remote places or rural areas, some products may be unavailable or very expensive in local stores. They can buy them through mail order at appropriate prices.

There are some problems in Chinese mail-order industry such as the lack of credit system. Consumers may take risks in after service guarantee or price fraud. These are common problems in Chinese non-store retail industry. It takes a long time to solve these problems.

In 2008, sales of Chinese largest mail-order enterprise Mecoxlane totaled approximately RMB 1 billion. In February, 2008, Sequoia Capital declared to control Mecoxlane by acquiring most of its shares. The investment exceeded USD 80 million. It was the largest single investment and first acquisition of Sequoia Capital.

Mail-order is one of the industries that maintain rapid growth in spite of global recession.

Through this report, readers can acquire more information:

- Development of Chinese mail-order industry
- Hot products in Chinese mail-order industry
- Major enterprises in Chinese mail-order industry and their operations
- Competition in Chinese mail-order industry
- Development trend of Chinese mail-order industry

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