

# Fit for the online future: Schulz. Outdoor relies on ChannelAdvisor for marketplace sales

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CASE STUDY



“With ChannelAdvisor, listing on multiple marketplaces is very easy and fast. That is the big leverage compared to an EAN match.”

– Matthias Schulz, Managing Director, schulz-outdoor-outlet GmbH

**Location:** Bensheim

**Web:** schulz-outdoor.de

**Category:** Fashion-Outdoor

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

Schulz. Outdoor is a force to be reckoned with in southern Hesse when it comes to high-quality outdoor and cycling clothing as well as swimwear. In 2015, company owner Matthias Schulz opened his first store in Bensheim. Success was not long in coming: In the following years, Schulz. Outdoor expanded in Eppertshausen, Michelstadt and Fürth. In 2018, the company finally launched its own online store. With 20 employees, schulz-outdoor-outlet GmbH today has a total turnover of around 5 million euros.

## THE SITUATION

As a next step, the successful entrepreneur wanted to build a strong presence on leading marketplaces: “I said to myself: Now is exactly the right time. Over the next few years, the marketplace business is going to explode,” explains Schulz, adding that his team took their first steps through Zalando Connected Retail. But the team says it quickly became clear that if they wanted to grow seriously online, that wouldn't be enough. Schulz reports that they started a cooperation with a SaaS provider but the collaboration turned out to be different than hoped, and implementation was slow. “We wanted faster response times and more proactive consulting,” Schulz recalls.

## THE SOLUTION

Finally, the tip with ChannelAdvisor came from his longtime IT service provider T4TD. For the online expansion, Schulz also brought Christian Engel from the consultancy firm fit4value on board, a freelance project manager specialising in digitalisation: this team, says Schulz, gave the marketplace business of Schulz. Outdoor the boost it needed.

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“The ChannelAdvisor Managed Services experts were all experienced professionals who drove our project for **ChannelAdvisor Marketplaces** forward in a structured way. They advised us both technically and professionally - so that our products were not only listed, but also prominently placed. Neither a retailer nor a technician can achieve that,” Engel reports.

The first project that Schulz. Outdoor tackled with ChannelAdvisor was the launch on Zalando. Schulz says it became clear that the sometimes complex onboarding processes can quickly overwhelm a retailer. This is where the platform provider scored with its managed service approach: “The experts from ChannelAdvisor helped to accelerate our go-live with their experience and excellent contacts,” confirms Schulz.

## THE RESULTS

While a connection to a marketplace elsewhere can take 12 weeks or longer, Schulz confirms ChannelAdvisor did it in just 6 to 8 weeks. “We had to invest significantly less time and nerves,” echoed Schulz and Engel unanimously. Since the start of the collaboration in November 2020, the project team has already achieved a lot:

- Internationalisation on Zalando: ChannelAdvisor’s e-commerce platform is designed to offer centralized management of product and inventory data in real time and accelerates listing - especially internationally. As a result, Engel says he was able to take off in a short time on Zalando’s marketplaces in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark and France. Currently, the outdoor outfitter already carries 6,000 items there: a third of them via its own listing, the rest via matching of existing EANs, and 11,000 more items are to follow.
- Presence on local marketplaces: In addition, ChannelAdvisor also advised Schulz. Outdoor on the selection of other, more local marketplaces, such as Allegro in Poland and Galaxus in Switzerland. In the process, Schulz’s team says the e-commerce platform always keeps inventory data up to date across all marketplaces, eliminating the risk of overselling. “If you want to expand successfully via international marketplaces, you can’t do it without ChannelAdvisor,” says Schulz.
- Third pillar complements stores and online store: By launching on the marketplaces, the apparel retailer reports it succeeded in establishing a strong additional pillar in a very short time. Even before the pandemic, the company confirms it achieved an online share of around 20 percent. In the meantime, sales via the Internet have been rising steadily month after month, according to Schulz. “Retailers who today rely only on brick-and-mortar stores are taking a big risk. ChannelAdvisor helps us cope with the Corona pandemic despite our outlets being closed,” affirms Schulz. In the short term, he says his company is targeting an online share of 50 percent.
- Professional digital marketing: In addition, ChannelAdvisor’s **managed services** team helps to draw more traffic to the company’s own store through **Digital Marketing** - be it with campaigns or with recommendations for an optimal presence on Google Shopping. Matthias Schulz emphasizes: “Marketplaces can be so demanding, we’re happy to put ourselves in ChannelAdvisor’s hands.”

His summary is correspondingly positive: “The holistic approach - from Google Ads to advice on store set-up to marketplace management - gets us ahead in every respect. You don’t really need anything else.” In working closely shoulder-to-shoulder with ChannelAdvisor, Schulz. Outdoor says it can now work full speed ahead towards its online future and new markets.

“Marketplaces are highly complex. We couldn’t have done it without ChannelAdvisor’s Managed Services for Marketplaces.”

“If you work with the right partners, you move forward much faster. ChannelAdvisor gave us top advice not only technically, but also professionally.”

– MATTHIAS SCHULZ,  
Managing Director,  
schulzoutdoor-outlet GmbH