

Preface

“A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake.”
(*Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, 551 – 479 B.C.*)

This principle is applicable in private life as well as business life and may be related to several situations. Since mistakes or failures cannot be prevented in principle, it is essential how failure situations are being handled. While mistakes in private life may be resolved reasonably simple, the handling of failure situations in business life is certainly more complex since a large number of social, economical, technical and political factors need to be considered.

As failure situations in business-to-business markets have the potential to damage and even diminish long-term customer relationships, it is critical for seller firms to understand the most effective measures by which product or service failures may be recovered. Although research on recovery in business-to-consumer markets has derived substantial findings on the most appropriate recovery measures, only few findings on adequate measures for the recovery of customer relationships in business-to-business markets have been identified till date.

Based on this substantial research gap, an exciting research process emerged to identify the fundamental recovery measures relevant for business-to-business markets and their impact on customer relationships and the financial situation of the seller firm based on qualitative as well as quantitative methodology. The results of the present thesis emphasize that the application of “effective” recovery measures may yield a positive impact on the business relationship between seller and customer firms after failure situations. Furthermore, the selection of effective recovery measures may exert a positive impact on the financial situation of the seller firm. Considering the increasing competitive intensity in several business-to-business markets, an effective recovery management unfolds new possibilities for seller firms to intensify and strengthen its customer relationships and prevent the defection of customers subsequent to failure situations.

The present thesis evolved during my position as an external doctoral student at the Chair of Service Management at the University of Paderborn and the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. I would like to express my highest gratitude towards my thesis supervisor Professor Dr. Jens Hogueve for the demanding and encouraging discussions, the creative and con-

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Since I have written the present thesis besides diﬀerent sales & marketing positions in two large industrial ﬁrms in Germany, I am grateful to those superiors during this time period, who have substantially supported this thesis. Due to these fine colleagues, the practical relevance of the investigation and the transferability of the results to business practice has never been neglected, but remained in the focus of the thesis. Moreover, I would like to thank my industrial companions, especially Dr. Florian Kienzle, Dr. Tommy Wetzel and Dr. Lars Leway, for the creative, inspiring and motivating discussions, which made the completion of the thesis more enjoyable.

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Kristian Döschner

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