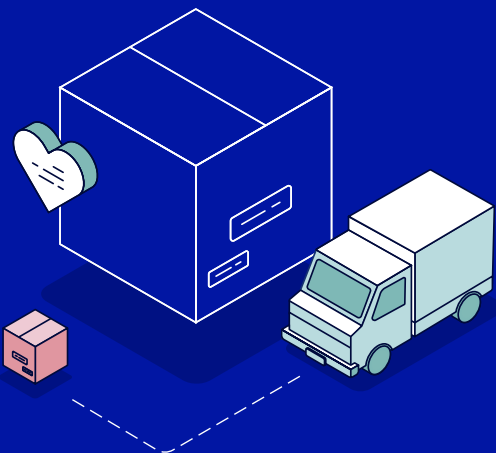# From returns to retention: building trust while increasing revenues and loyalty

The importance of operating a clear, straightforward and user-friendly returns process

nShift

# Introduction:
a growing urgency

A clear returns policy is no longer an optional extra for retailers and webshops. If shoppers are confused about how to return an item, they are less likely to buy it in the first place.

How a company manages returns is crucial to how its brand is perceived by the shopper. If the experience is positive, they will be inclined to come back for more. If the process is frustrating and cumbersome, people will shop around for a better one.

And as well as making the shopping experience more user-friendly for consumers, a straightforward returns process makes it easier for retailers to gain crucial data about their business. They can use it to transform the shopping experience and grow their revenue.

This guide explores the five core components of a great returns process. It then shows how important a workable returns policy is for retailers of all sizes. It explains how digitalizing the procedure with a software partner can help retailers get a clear policy in place quickly and build trust with shoppers.

Five components of a good returns process
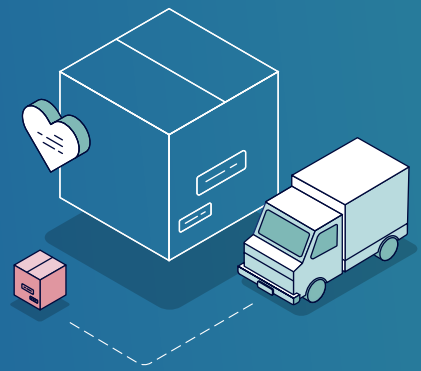
When it comes to crafting the right returns policy and process, one size will not fit all. Different sectors will have different requirements. Different consumer groups will vary in their expectations.

Nevertheless, there are five core principles that resonate across retail sectors.

A good returns process should:

Create a user-friendly consumer experience

Customers today have high expectations of technology. They won't tolerate an interface or application that looks clunky or is difficult to use.

Be seamless and integrated

Part of making a returns process easy for the consumer is making it quick and streamlined. Any returns-related tech must integrate with the retailer's book and print solution to ensure that consumers can quickly select the return shipping option which works best for them.

Improve the shopping experience

Collecting and analyzing data on returned items helps retailers spot patterns and identify solutions. If shoppers keep returning T-shirts that are "too big", retailers can warn future purchasers that they may want to opt for the next size down. If a particular product keeps malfunctioning, this can be addressed in the supply chain. The right returns platform collates this data and makes it easy to analyze.

Improve operations

Digitizing the returns process gives warehouses advanced warning that a returned product is on its way back. When items are returned in store, they can be checked back in ahead of their arrival at the warehouse. With the right insights, returns processes can drive operational efficiency.

Be scalable

A returns policy is essential. Retailers and web shops need one in place quickly. However, as they grow, they will need to evolve their process into one which includes more automation. It's vital to select returns software at the outset which can grow with the company and provide greater functionality as required.

Each of these requirements is best achieved by adopting a digital returns process. As the next section shows, creating a clear and easy-to-use returns process is no longer an optional extra.

No return: doing nothing is not an option
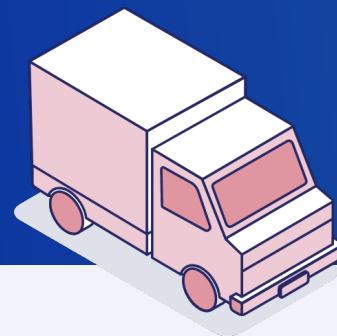
When shoppers seek to return items they've purchased, the retailer runs the risk of losing revenue. For some, the logical conclusion might be to not give consumers the option of returning purchases or making the process as difficult as possible.

But such a decision comes at a cost. Some 67% of shoppers check the returns policy before making a purchasing decision.   If they fail to find one, or find it unsatisfactory, they are less likely to hit the buy button.

Put simply, not offering a returns policy is no longer an option. It damages relationships with consumers and makes people less likely to purchase. People today have higher expectations of the online shopping experience than ever before. When they can't find a customer experience they like, they will shop around for a better one.

Creating a clear and user-friendly returns policy has many benefits:

Strengthens customer loyalty

Some 92% of consumers claim will buy again from a retailer if the returns process is easy.   With a straightforward returns procedure, vendors may take a hit on an individual item, but they could win over a customer for life. This creates revenue over the long term. Conversely, those that find the returns process frustrating are more likely to take their business elsewhere.

Increases sales

Many shoppers see a returns policy as a guarantee that the retailer or web shop believes in its products. It increases trust in the brand and gives shoppers confidence that their decision is not irreversible. They are more likely to buy more as a result.

Cuts down on customer inquiries

If a returns policy is not clear on the web shop, retailers risk overwhelming their customer services team with inquiries. Shoppers may grow increasingly frustrated with the process, damaging their relationship with the brand and placing stress on team members that have to field their complaints.
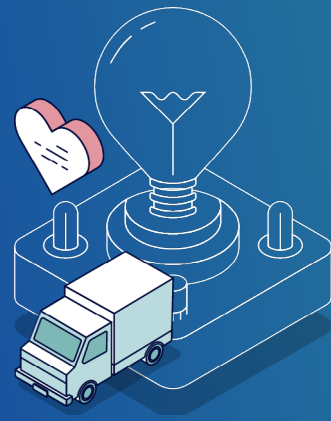
Satisfy regulators and legal requirements

It is increasingly the case that countries around the world insist that retailers offer returns policies in certain circumstances. By creating a process that works for consumers and builds the brand with shoppers, retailers can stay ahead of the regulatory curve.

[1]https://www.invespcro.com/blog/ecommerce-product-return-rate-statistics/
[2]https://www.invespcro.com/blog/ecommerce-product-return-rate-statistics/

Conclusion: how nShift can help

Online retailers and web shops must present a clear returns policy and process to their consumers. If they don't, they reduce the likelihood of purchase. They lose the opportunity to build loyalty and gain crucial data about their business.

So, it's important to get a consumer-friendly process in place quickly. One that is professional, easy to use and makes the returns process easier for both shoppers and the warehouse.

The majority of 'book and print' delivery management software platforms claim they offer a returns solution. In reality, they are often simply reversing the shipping process. This is unlikely to give the consumer the user-friendly experience they expect. It makes it harder for the business to use data from returns to solve common problems and improve operations.

nShift's Returns solution helps retailers build loyalty making returns easy. It helps ecommerce companies typically convert 30% of returns to exchanges.

nShift has launched an "Essential" tier to its Returns offer, an easy-to-install returns solution for retailers and webshops handling around 10,000 returns a year, which currently process requests by hand.

Returns Essential offers:

A cutting-edge consumer interface
that is easy for shoppers to use and navigate

Integration with delivery management
so that the return shipping options are clearly displayed online, making it easier for the consumer to choose

Returns tracking
so that stores and warehouses can anticipate when returned items will be arriving back

Actionable returns data
enabling businesses to solve common problems, making returns less likely in the future

Speed
with our Returns Essential option, the returns process can be up and running within a week

Scalability
as the number of returns grow, retailers should seek to automate more aspects of the returns process, such as refunds. nShift customers can simply upgrade from the 'Essential' tier to include these services.
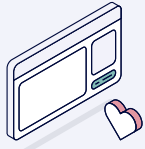
We work with customers around the world, helping them to introduce and perfect their digital returns process. Please get in touch to find out more.

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nShift is a multicarrier shipping solution that helps you get delivery right.

Every step. Every time.

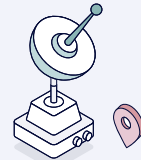### Checkout
Offer your customers the delivery options they want

Book
Automatically select the right carrier for every delivery

Print
Print any label or document instantly

Track
Follow every parcel's journey from beginning to end

And repeat...

Report
View and analyze all your data in one place

Return
Make returning products easy for you and your customers

Deliver
Make delivery more convenient by adding options such as click and collect

A seamless solution to benefit you

CARRIER MANAGEMENT

8% cost savings with optimized carrier management

nSHIFT CHECKOUT

Up to 20% higher conversions with nShift Checkout

SUPPORT CALLS

60% reduction in customer support calls

CARRIER BOOKINGS

Up to 50% time savings with automated carrier bookings

Are you interested in nShift or do you have any questions?

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