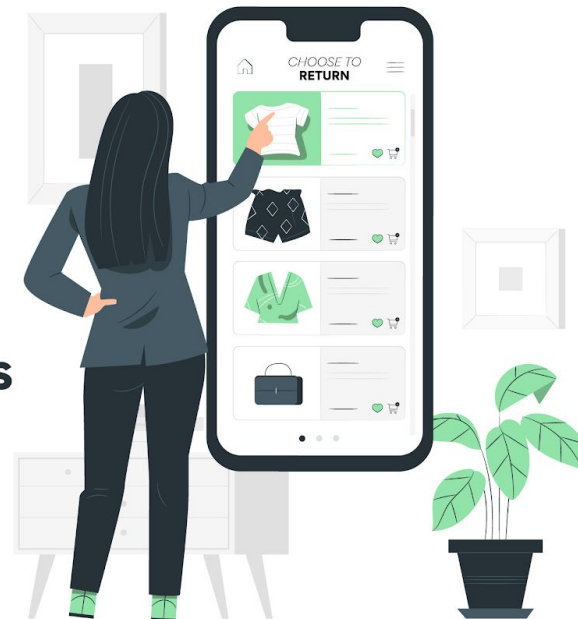


Best Practices to Handle and Reduce eCommerce Product Returns

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Introduction

Who doesn't love an excellent return policy? So tell me something. What have you done to differentiate your company from the competition? You may say, you have an exceptional product range and excellent customer service, but how about the returns policy? These are the small things that make a huge difference. How are your return policies? Are they working with you or working against you?

Put yourself in your customer's shoes and ask yourself, if you would deal with a company that will not take back a product or has poor return policies? I am pretty sure of the answer to that question, and still, let me spell it out to you; no one likes to deal with unfavorable return policies. We all want flexibility in choosing and returning goods. Then, let us work towards creating a great customer experience by providing them impressive return policies.

“Be as liberal as possible with your returns policy. Return windows are becoming more important to consumers, and they have an increasingly large choice of places to buy.” Rieva Lesonsky, CEO GrowBizMedia & SmallBizDaily.com

Key Statistics about Return Policies

Free Shipping: Nearly **49% of retailers** offer free return shipping policies

Repeat Customers: Roughly **92% of customers** will buy again given easy return policies

Check Policy: Nearly **67% of customers** check the return policies before placing an order

Any Questions: Approximately **58% of customers** prefer “No Question Asked” return policies

With these facts and figures, we can conclude that customers definitely believe in shopping with an easy return policy company. Not only that, they will order again if the return policies are flexible and accommodating in nature.

You have to understand, unlike retail markets or brick and mortar stores, customers do not have the privilege to see and try your products physically, nor can they make purchases after interacting with your sales staff. It is a complete virtual shopping experience. Thus, if the customer trusts you enough by shopping with you without seeing or trying your product, you owe it to them to provide at least an easygoing return policy.

Best Practices to Handle and Reduce your eCommerce Returns

Now that we have understood the statistics and importance of a good online shopping return policy, most of your returns can be handled and reduced by having a great returns policy in place. So, let us learn what can be done for a better return policy experience.

1. Make Convenient Return Policies

When shopping online, customers of all age groups will opt to purchase, but very few of them will be able to handle returns. Thus, make your policies flexible for everyone to understand and follow. This will set you apart from your competitors. One of the few ways you can provide to make this possible is ‘Go Omnichannel’. Provide the option to return online via shipping or in-store returns. One of the best examples of omnichannel returns policy is Oasis, a Fashion Retail Brand.

DELIVER TO ME

CLICK & COLLECT

FREE RETURNS

Here's the deal - we want your new purchase to be absolutely perfect. That's why if it's not quite right or you need a different size, all our returns are free.

RETURNING YOUR ITEM – THE BASICS >

RETURNING YOUR ITEM TO STORE >

RETURNS WITH **Doddlē.** >

RETURNS WITH **myHermes** >

RETURNS WITH HOME COLLECTION **myHermes** >

RETURNS WITH  >

Image Courtesy: bigcommerce

2. Clear and Transparent Return Policy

It is essential to have an evident policy. Do not try to trick your customers by hiding a few policies; instead, layout all the points of your returns policy and terms and conditions for a better customer experience. Everyone likes transparency. So always talk to them or convey your message very clearly through your policy.

RETURN COURIER SERVICE

We have a return courier service available if you would like us to coordinate the return shipment for you. We will simply deduct the fees from your refund amount. Please let us know in your email to info@redsbaby.com.au whether you would like to use this service, and we will provide you with a quote based on your nominated address.

Collection will take place from your nominated address on a business day (i.e. not a public holiday or weekend within your state or territory) between 7am and 5.30pm.



Image Courtesy: bigcommerce

3. Visibility in Finding Returns Policy

No matter how clear your policy is, it will not do any good if they are not visible. According to the statistics mentioned above, nearly **67% of customers** read the returns policy **before** placing an order. So make sure your return policies are very easy to find. This indeed makes a customer quickly purchase the product.

4. Provide FAQs and Answers Questions

There are times when customers still have a doubt about your returns policy. In this case, always fill up your FAQs appropriately and cover as many points as possible. Customers also ask questions in times of uncertainty about the policy. Make sure to be proactive in approach and give a quick response to any of their queries. Examples of some of the FAQs are:

- a. I have opened the packing and it is not what I had ordered, can I still return the product?
- b. What is the timeline for returns? Will you accept my returns if the timeline has exceeded?
- c. Will I get a refund or exchange when I return this product?

There are many more FAQs and you can go through them here.

5. Mention Deadlines and ‘Last Date to Return’

Be very clear in your message. Do not play around with your words and very clearly mention the timeframe or deadline for any returns. You can mention a ‘30-day return policy’, this one line attracts many customers and sure does help increase sales. Or you can set a predefined time frame and say, we accept returns from ‘January 5, 2021 - January 15, 2021, or within one week of placing an order. This way, customers know what to expect and they can take action accordingly. In the long run, it will help to provide a better customer experience.

RETURNS POLICY

You may return most new, unopened items within 30 days of delivery for a full refund. We'll also pay the return shipping costs if the return is a result of our error (you received an incorrect or defective item, etc.).

You should expect to receive your refund within four weeks of giving your package to the return shipper, however, in many cases you will receive a refund more quickly. This time period includes the transit time for us to receive your return from the shipper (5 to 10 business days), the time it takes us to process your return once we receive it (3 to 5 business days), and the time it takes your bank to process our refund request (5 to 10 business days).


If you need to return an item, please [Contact Us](#) with your order number and details about the product you would like to return. We will respond quickly with instructions for how to return items from your order.

Image Courtesy: bigcommerce


6. Offer Free Return Shipping

Amazon surely is the best example of free shipping on returns. They do not charge their customers for returns. When you do so, customers start showing confidence in your company and, for sure, returns back for another order. Yes, free shipping is a challenge, but it attracts customers and increases your goodwill. According to a survey, 79% of customers want free shipping on returns. Also, you can increase sales by offering easy and free return shipping. For example,

‘Get free shipping on orders above \$ 100’ or ‘Buy another product along with this to avail free return shipping.’



**FREE SHIPPING-
FREE RETURNS**



Hyphen mattresses ship in a box smaller than your TV (maybe). Just unbox, unwrap, and begin your countdown to better sleep.

**RISK-FREE
100
NIGHT
TRIAL**

**100 NIGHT-
SLEEP TRIAL**

100 days of guilt-free sleep. If you decide to move to the Himalayas within 100 nights of your purchase, don't sweat it.

Image Courtesy: bigcommerce

7. Provide ‘Return Status’ Tab to Track Returns

What comes after returning a product? How will your customer know the status of your returns? Well, that is why you should always offer a ‘Track your Returns’ or ‘Check Return Status’, so that the customers can easily track their returns and take further necessary actions like Reorder. Tracking the returns is an efficient way to handle the eCommerce returns.

The screenshot displays the Amazon.de 'Track your return & refund' page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Amazon logo, a search bar, and user account information. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Your Account > Your Orders > Track your return & refund'. A product image of a black beanie is shown. The main content area features a progress bar with four steps: 'Return started' (completed on Feb 23), 'Drop off the item by Thu, Mar 1', 'Refund sent once we get the item', and 'Refund on your card'. To the right of the progress bar is a 'Refund summary' table and a 'Manage your return' section with links for 'Cancel this return', 'View order details', and 'Write a product review', along with a 'Continue shopping' button.

| Refund summary | |
|---|------------------|
| EUR 31.51 will be sent to your payment card | |
| Item price | EUR 25.21 |
| VAT | EUR 6.30 |
| Estimated total refund | EUR 31.51 |

| Manage your return | |
|--|--|
| Cancel this return | |
| View order details | |
| Write a product review | |

Image Courtesy: bigcommerce

8. Offer Exchanges and Refunds Both

Always offer both the alternatives to the customers. Yes, it is a risk that the customer may opt for a refund, but if the customer is in dire need of the product, they will definitely go for exchange. Also, you can try avoiding the refund by providing them products at a discounted rate. For example,

‘We noticed that you returned our product. We are sorry that you had to return, let us make this right for you. Buy any product by using discount code ‘EasyReturns’ to avail discount on your next purchase. Offer valid till January 15, 2021.’

“It’s important to keep your returns and refunds policies simple. Customers do not want to jump through hoops if something doesn’t work out for them. It should be just as easy to return an item or get a refund, as it was to purchase.” Vladimir Gendelman, Founder and CEO, Printwand

This policy will help you handle the returns in an immensely customer-friendly manner.



Items You Are Not Satisfied With

If you are dissatisfied with an item, we want to quickly correct the problem. We will gladly replace or exchange the item, or refund the amount you paid. You may return items that are unsatisfactory within 90 days, providing they are unused and in their original packaging. You can download and print a copy of our [Return Form](#) for your convenience. We encourage you to call Customer Service at 1-800-860-6272 before returning a product that is used so we can provide you with the best service.

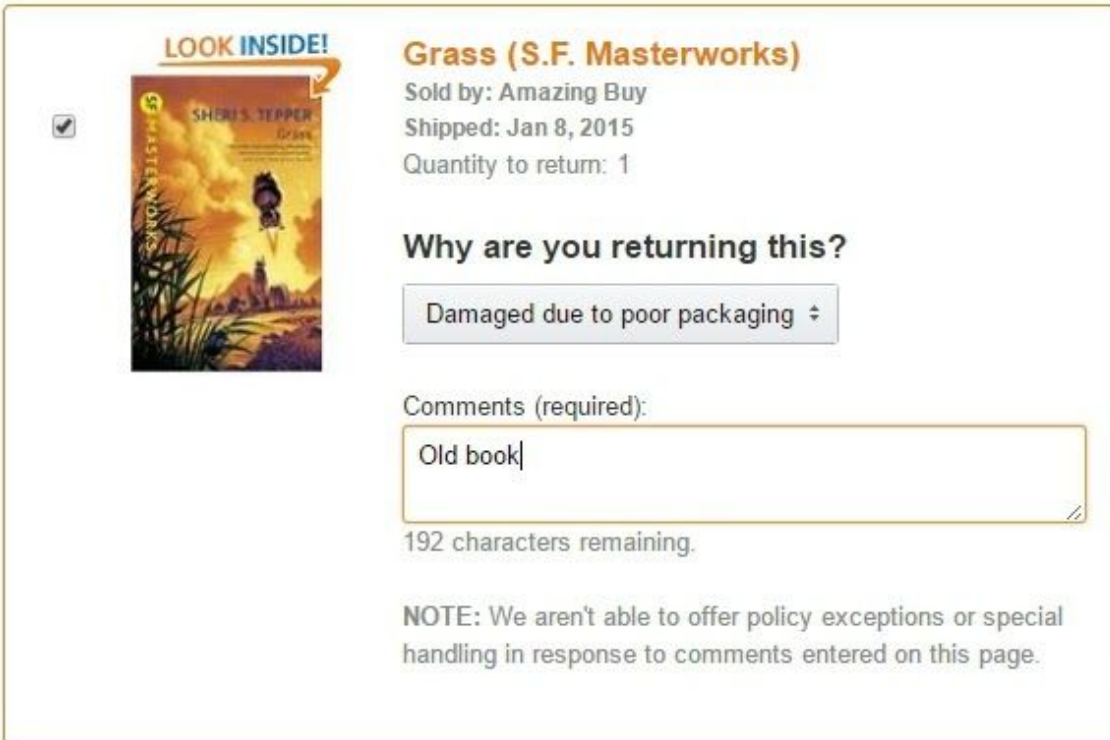
Image Courtesy: bigcommerce

9. Offer Extended Returns on Circumstances

There are times when customers miss the deadline. They may call you and request an extension. Do get in touch with them and understand their problem, it may be a genuine reason. This happens mostly during festive seasons. Also, if a customer genuinely forgot the deadline. So get in touch with them and offer an extension instead of forcefully making them keep your product. Understand, it will be lying around in their house aimlessly instead if you provide an extension you will gain a customer. Infact, a very pleased and grateful customer.

10. Always Mention ‘Reason of Return’

One of the key pointers that will help reduce eCommerce returns is by asking the reason for returns. Make sure to add a tab where they can mention the reason. This way, you are always aware and can rectify the situation for the next time. If the quality is bad, you can work towards offering better quality products. If the product is not the same as the picture, check your product listing and rectify the pictures. This way, each and every reason will help you get better.



LOOK INSIDE!

Grass (S.F. Masterworks)

Sold by: Amazing Buy
Shipped: Jan 8, 2015
Quantity to return: 1

Why are you returning this?

Damaged due to poor packaging ▾

Comments (required):

Old book

192 characters remaining.

NOTE: We aren't able to offer policy exceptions or special handling in response to comments entered on this page.

Image Courtesy: NDTV Gadgets

Best Company Example of a Great Return Policy

We have covered a lot of practices to create an exceptionally great experience for a customer's return process. But when talking about the best practices, how can we forget real-life companies that are offering great returns policy! Let's have a look at some of them.

1. IKEA

IKEA offers 365 days return policy. Yes, you heard it right! Even if the product has been assembled and for some reason, you want to return it, you can! Also, they provide in-store exchanges as well.

It's ok to change your mind

If you're not totally satisfied with your IKEA purchase you can return your products within 365 days, even if you assembled them, as long as they're in an unused. Please return them with proof of purchase (original receipt) and, if possible, the packaging.

Please note that our 365-day returns policy does not apply to plants, food, drinks, Bargain Corner products, or goods ordered to your specifications, e.g. custom-made worktops. Also, if you made a purchase with a credit card, you need to come to the store in person with your credit card and ID so that we can process the refund to the card.

Image Courtesy: IKEA



2. Zappos

Zappos is a leading shoe and apparel online store as well as retailer. They offer 365 days return policy as long as the product is unworn and with original packing. So, if you bought a pair of shoes from them and could never use it, worry not, they will take them back!



Image Courtesy: Zappos

3. Bath and Body Works

Bath and Body Works has a significant online presence and along with that, they offer lucrative deals and returns policy. They will take back any product if they are unused or even if it is slightly used. All they need in return is proof of purchase. And even then, they offer returns if you don't have a receipt based on the situation.

Bath & Body Works®

BODY CARE

HAND SOAPS

HOME FRAGRANCE

GIFTS

TOP OFFERS

How Can We Help You?



WHAT IS YOUR RETURN POLICY?

We just want you to love it! Return anything, anytime for any reason. 100% Guaranteed.

For instructions on how to make a return, view our [Online Purchase Return FAQ](#) or our [Store Purchase Return FAQ](#).

[How can I track my order?](#)

[What do I do if my delivery is late or lost?](#)

[What do I do if I receive a damaged item?](#)

Image Courtesy: Bath and Body Works

Conclusion

A simple, attractive, and transparent returns policy works wonders for a company. Don't look at the word 'return' as a negative expression but instead, look at it as a means of attracting customers. Find innovative ways to resolve the returns experience for your customer, they purchased from you once, for sure, they will do it again. Just make sure you give them a sound return experience. [eCommerce automation](#) will help you make this process simpler and all you have to do is add triggers to send messages or emails or even schedule pickups. Though it is a returns process, you sure can make it fun by using eCommerce automation.

References

[Statistics on eCommerce Returns](#)

[Practices to Reduce eCommerce Returns](#)

[Companies with the Best and Worst Returns Policy](#)

[The Best Return Policies in Retailers](#)