



Reverse Logistics: Tips E-tailer Can Follow to Reduce Online Product Returns

Description

Customers demand hassle free returns- According to survey conducted for US consumers by UPS ,” 67% review return policies before making a purchase and 58% want a hassle-free return policy with no questions”

Cost and convenience of returns is a key differentiator for a consumer in deciding where to purchase online. Marketplaces commit the buyer with attractive return policies which sellers have to fulfill. The return policies vary for marketplaces in India like Snapdeal have 7 days returns policy whereas its competitors amazon, Flipkart offers 30 days return policy for Lifestyle and Large Appliances and 10 days return policy for sports, home, electronics, automotive category of products.

Online retailers / sellers can follow the below-listed practices in order to minimize their returns

- **Provide complete product details:** While buying, online customers often come across through some of the products having an incomplete description . Buying that product lands the seller into return process. For example, as per my observation on a marketplace black hooded jacket is listed which indicates the size as S and age group 10-12 years. It would be helpful to provide proper size chart specifying chest , waist and arm measurements for all the available sizes.
- **Accurate Product Information:** The sellers on the marketplaces and the e-tailers having their own portals should ensure that the product information is accurate and consistent. For example, the information for variants should be same, only the varied feature should be different. Providing varied information confuses the customer regarding the product quality.

- **High Quality Images:** Image of the product should not mismatch with the actual product. Images with white background, high resolution so that zoom functionality works effectively. Incorporate alternate views from varied angles to have a 360-degree view of image. Ensure the different images for all the variants available.
- **Evaluate Historical Return Requests:** Analytics can be used effectively by analyzing the historical return requests and thus prioritizing the measures to improve. While creating return request seller can ask customer to select a reason from predefined checklist and can even ask him to add a new one if e-tailer is not doing that currently.
- **Analyze Ratings and reviews:** E-tailer must keep a track of the reviews posted for the product. Analyzing them would assist in finding the root cause for returns.
- **Pack it well :** Make sure product fits the package and have enough space for additional packing materials. Extra padding for the items to be handled with care would ensure it reaches in good condition.
- **Quality Check:** Quality check using bar code scanners can be performed to check the weight, and dimensions of the package at each step. This would ensure no fraudulent activities happen in the whole process.
- **Deliver timely:** Sometimes , there can be a case that the customer wants the product on the urgent basis or within a defined period. I personally ordered a handbag for my mother's birthday from Satya Paul's web portal and it arrives after the birthday somehow I managed to gift my mother.

Source: UPS Survey