

Brand Your Shipping

ShipStation®

HOW TO
OVERCOME
THE BRAND
DEAD ZONE



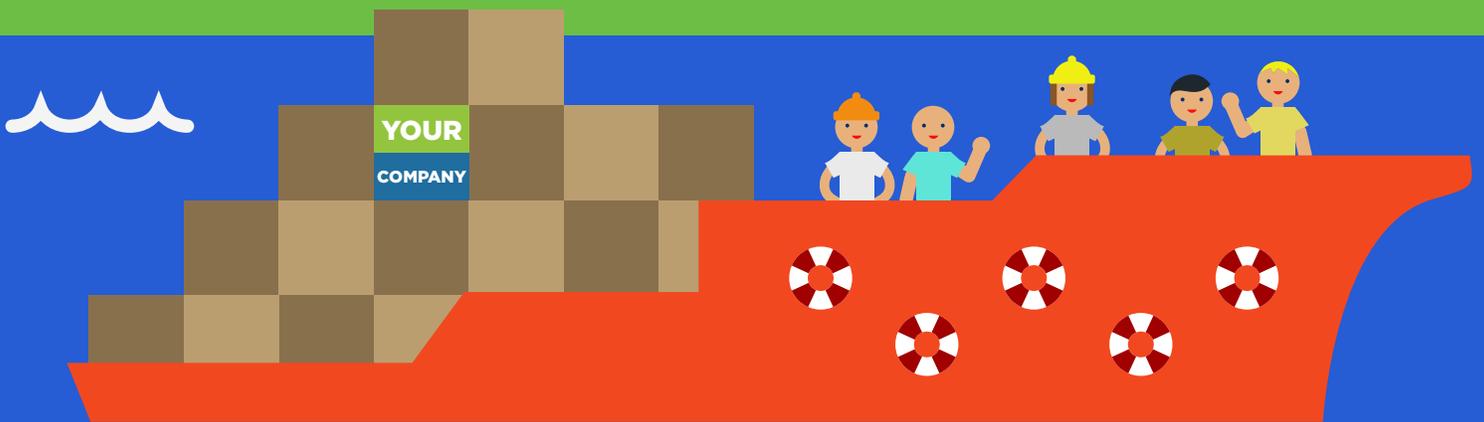
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CHAPTER
1

Introduction
**TO BRANDED
SHIPPING**



Introduction to Branded Shipping

Your brand is everything. Your name, logo, website, identity – each piece blends together to be your brand. And the most successful retailers recognize how the presence (or absence) of their brand affects the customer experience.

But not every retailer realizes there are opportunities to build brand loyalty after a shopper checks out. **If you want to keep the brand-customer conversation going, it's essential to provide an exceptional post-purchase experience.** You must incorporate your brand into every part of the process – including packaging and shipping.



Developing a branding strategy in tandem with your shipping strategy is the most effective way to provide an outstanding shipping experience that will contribute to your brand's overall success. With a comprehensive strategy in place, you can guide customers on a journey of delight, relationship building, and repeat purchases.



What Is the Brand Dead Zone?

You've most likely heard the term "dead zone" in the context of a location with no cell signal. It's a place with zero communication between two parties. A conversation could be possible, but it'd mean additional investment from telecom companies.

Think about the Brand Dead Zone in the same way. The phrase refers to the period between when a shopper places an order and when the order is received. It's the time when companies could connect with customers but often don't due to the increased commitment.

Why Does It Matter?

We know: "Brand Dead Zone" does sound a little ominous. But how you approach the Brand Dead Zone is not a decision that should be taken lightly. A good post-purchase and shipping experience encourages brand loyalty. And a negative post-purchase experience can turn a shopper off from your brand entirely.

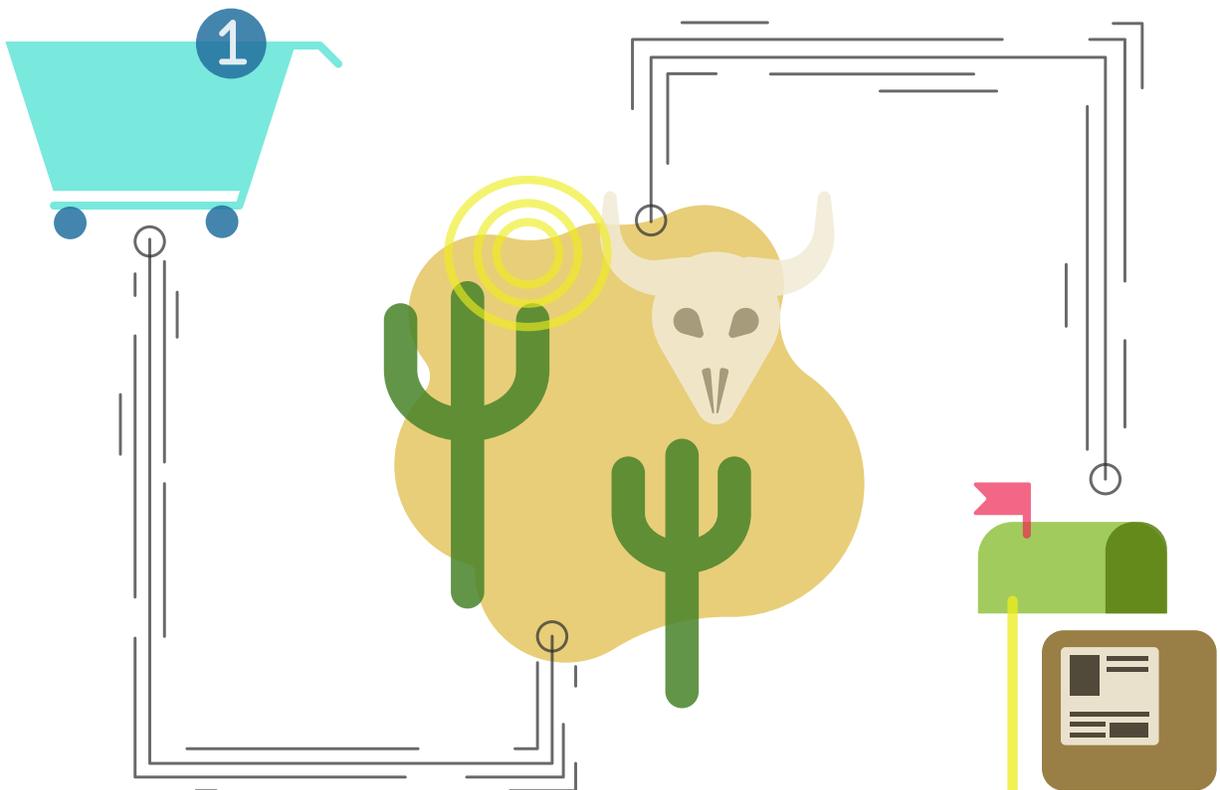
The Brand Dead Zone presents a perfect opportunity to establish a meaningful relationship with your customers. And to make the most of this opportunity, you must ensure your brand is always front and center. Branded shipping empowers you to traverse the Brand Dead Zone by enabling you to maintain your presence at every step of the customer journey and ultimately improve customer retention and loyalty.

Brand Dead Zone: an unbranded, unengaged customer experience that exists between checkout and post-delivery unboxing.

What Can I Do?

At the end of this ebook is a shipping checklist you can use to build customer loyalty and define your brand. Here's a sneak peek:

1. Choose the best shipping options for your store.
2. Effectively communicate with your customers.
3. Craft a creative and unique outside of the box experience.
4. Offer a mutually beneficial returns policy.

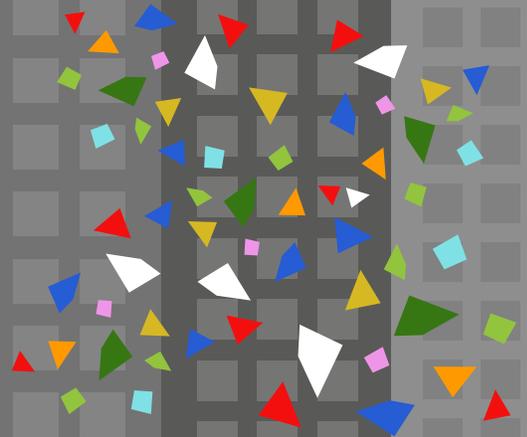


Eliminate the Brand Dead Zone by integrating each of these crucial steps into your brand strategy. You can foster outstanding customer loyalty and good relationships with new and existing customers.



<https://www.youonlinestore.com>

CHAPTER 2:
SHIPPING *at*
CHECKOUT



YOUR COMPANY

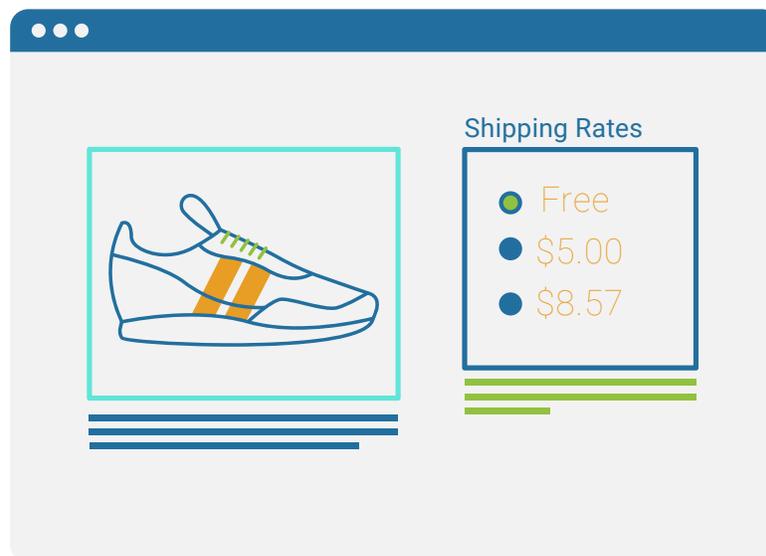
• *Cyber Cafe* •



Shipping at Checkout

Some ecommerce brands concentrate their efforts on creating a well-designed website and a user interface that starts and ends with encouraging customers to add items to their cart. A streamlined shopping experience is all well and good, but if the focus on customer experience is ditched once the shopper is ready to check out, the connection between you and the consumer is lost.

The shipment method your company adopts is vital to your customer's purchasing decisions and can be a determining factor of your sales. **Ensure your shipping approach sways your customers into an instant buying decision by implementing a mutually beneficial shipping method.**



Why Shipping Options Matter

A company's shipping and handling method heavily influences the customer's buying decision. An eMarketer study found¹, **86%** of shoppers did not complete their online purchase because shipping and handling costs were too high. There are various ways to offer shipping to customers that will keep your margins from dropping and your customers attracted.

¹Does Cart Abandonment Really Come Down to Cost?, eMarketer, 2011



No Cost

Free shipping is the most appealing and beneficial method of shipping you can offer a customer. ComScore found² **58%** of customers who were eligible for free shipping added items to their shopping carts in order to take advantage of the offer. And **83%** of consumers will wait an additional two days to receive their order if it means free delivery.

This method can help set your company apart from other companies who don't offer free shipping. It can also help you increase profits.

Even with increased conversion rates, however, free shipping can still cut into your margins without a proper strategy. Here are a few methods to test:

- ▶ Increase your product's pricing to compensate for the need to absorb shipping costs.
- ▶ Promote upselling and cross selling to encourage customers to buy higher-end items from your store or related, complementary items.
- ▶ Offer free shipping in specific situations. For example:
 - Treat your first time customers to incentivize future purchases.
 - Pick a few of your most popular products and offer free shipping on only those items.
 - Give free shipping to shoppers in your country and charge for international orders.
 - Offer free shipping to customers after they've reached a fixed dollar amount – for example, "Spend Over \$50 and Receive Free Shipping." This is also known as a cart threshold.

Pro Tip:

Free shipping can help boost sales. If customers see a shipping charge, they're more likely to abandon their cart. Most are willing to wait an additional two days to get free shipping if an option.

²Study: Consumers Demand More Flexibility When Shopping Online, ComScore, 2014



Flat Rate

Online retailers who use flat-rate shipping charge every customer the same amount for shipping, regardless of what the shopper orders. Flat-rate shipping is an attractive option for e-retailers who cannot afford to offer free shipping. It's also less complicated than calculating the various shipping costs for orders of different sizes and weights.

You'll need to take a look at the average cost of shipping for previous orders to determine the best rate for your company. With this data, you can make sure you're not undercharging (which can hurt your profit margins) or overcharging (which can discourage shoppers from completing an order).

While offering flat-rate shipping will sometimes mean charging less than what you pay to ship larger orders, you'll make up the difference on smaller shipments. As long as you've properly calculated the best rate for your business, shipping costs will begin to balance out.

Calculated Rates

Calculated shipping uses the weight of an order, the dimensions of the package, and the shipping destination to determine how much a customer will be charged. This feature (available in most ecommerce solutions) eliminates the need for merchants to enter shipping charges manually. And if rates aren't set automatically, there is a greater risk of overcharging a customer, which can make them abandon their cart.

Calculated shipping lets retailers be confident shipping costs are always displayed correctly. And it also makes sure customers know exactly how much they'll be charged -- getting rid of any unpleasant surprises that lead to abandoned carts.

The shipment method your company adopts is vital to your customer's purchasing decisions and can be a determining factor of your sales. Ensure your shipping approach sways your customers into an instant buying decision by implementing a mutually beneficial shipping method.

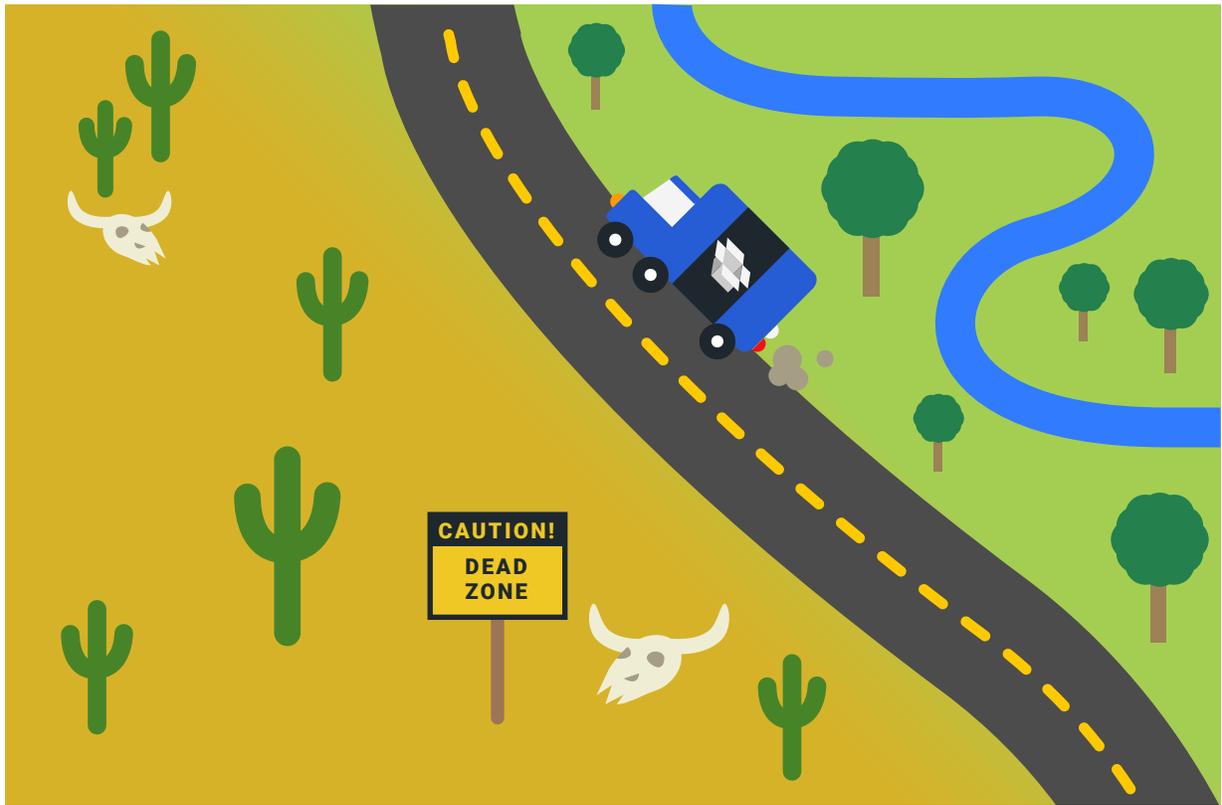
CHAPTER 3: TRACKING & DELIVERY

Notifications & Emails

PRE-SHIPPING

ON ROUTE

DELIVERED



YOUR

COMPANY



Tracking & Delivery

Pro Tip:

Provide tracking information to create transparency between purchase and delivery. It will also reduce daily order inquiries.

Providing up-to-date tracking information is an important component of moving across the Brand Dead Zone. Without tracking information, your customers may feel as if they're in the dark and this can decrease your chances of encouraging repeat purchases, negatively affecting your profit margins.

Dissatisfied customers may tell their family and friends about their poor shipping experience. They may also post on social media to warn others about the unsatisfactory service. **By keeping customers informed, you establish your company as trustworthy and reliable.** This will make your customers feel comfortable ordering from you again.



Listening to your customer's queries, comments, and concerns through your communication channels will help you develop better relationships with your customers and improve in areas that might have been overlooked.

Emails, a branded tracking page, and social media will keep your customers up-to-date with their shipment status. Meanwhile, it will build your brand loyalty by remedying the Brand Dead Zone.

Email Notifications

Email notifications continue to be one of the most direct and reliable ways to give your customers valuable information. **From informing your customers about their orders and providing tracking details to promoting your upcoming sales, email communication will boost your brand loyalty.**

Setting up an email notification system for your customers contribute to maintaining your connection. These alerts keep your customers informed when their package is shipped, the status of the package when it's in transit, and when it has arrived.

Additionally, in the event of an unexpected delay, an email notification alerting the customer to the situation and how you plan to resolve the issue can help reduce frustration.



Social Media

During the Brand Dead Zone, your customer might be inclined to ask questions or stay connected. Social media platforms are great for answering customer questions, engaging with your community, and staying on top of your industry's latest news, trends, and discussions. Having social media as a convenient resource to connect with your company will help increase brand loyalty.

The amount of effort you put behind the utilization of social media will play a big role in your overall engagement, exposure, and contact with current and potential customers.



Stay ahead of the competition and outperform brands who don't directly communicate with their customers on social platforms. Your company will have new opportunities for growth, which can lead to higher overall profits.

Branded Tracking Page

A branded tracking page is a useful tool for both your customer and your company. Your customers have a visual, up-to-date status on their package, and you have the opportunity to keep your brand top of mind.

While doing so, you're also cutting back the volume of customer status inquiries. This can decrease your workload and give you more time to focus on other tasks.

The **benefits of a branded tracking page** include:

- Company logo, colors, and messaging
- Links to social media
- Phone number and email for support
- Customer's order tracked on an interactive map
- A mobile-friendly interface
- Tracking updates and order details
- Easy to view returns policy

YOUR LOGO



YOUR COLORS



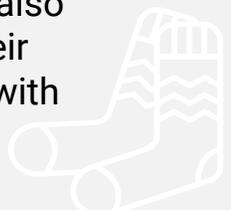
YOUR PAGES



YOUR PHOTOS



Our friends at Sock Club love ShipStation's **branded tracking page**. Max Williamson, the Operations Manager said, "I've enjoyed being able to use the branded tracking page. It's made a nice landing page where someone can go in where it represents our brand and be able to track their order." He also said the links to their social media on the page helps customers find their brand faster, and the contact information makes it easy to get in touch with customer service.



Thank
You!

CHAPTER 4:

OPTIMIZE *the* UNBOXING EXPERIENCE

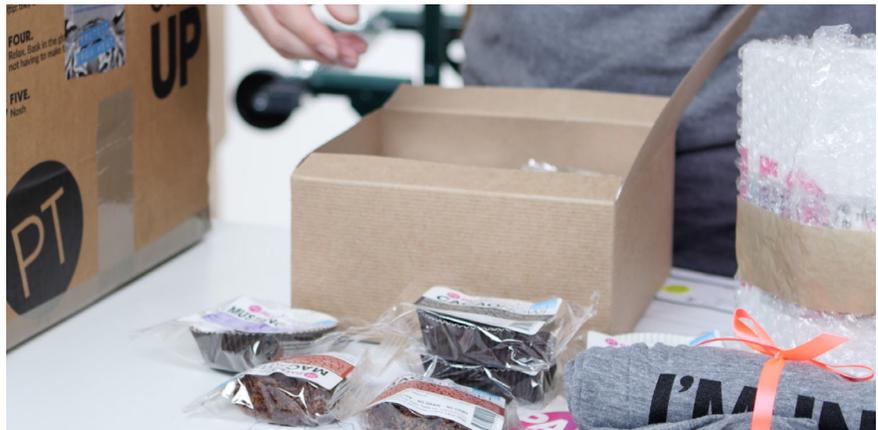
YOUR COMPANY

YOUR
ORDER

Optimize the Unboxing Experience

At a brick-and-mortar store, once the customer has paid for their items, a sales associate might wrap their purchase nicely with colorful tissue paper, add coupons for an upcoming sale, and then place everything in a branded retail bag. The satisfied customer, appreciating the effort that went into bagging their items, will smile as they move onto the next step in their shopping experience.

Before ecommerce brands began realizing the potential of packaging, the delivery process was transactional, not experiential. A plain brown box would arrive on a customer's doorstep and although their desired product was inside, there was no connection between the customer and the brand. The opportunity to continue the conversation between brand and customer was lost.

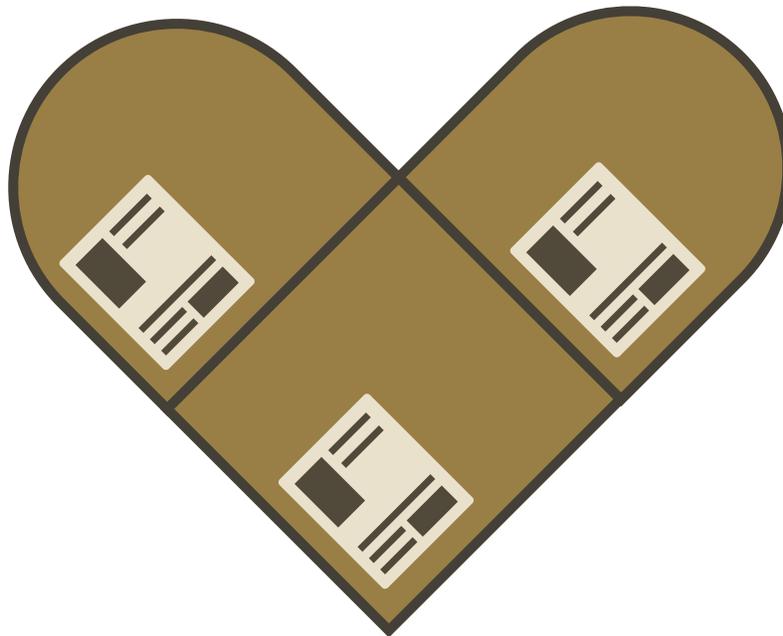


However, today's ecommerce brands have the ability to add a little love to their packaging – just like their brick-and-mortar counterparts. When a customer opens a parcel from your company (an event referred to as “unboxing”), it's just one more opportunity to show your customers you care.



Deepening Your Connection

How your brand treats the unboxing experience shows the heart of your company. Unboxing is not simply the act of unveiling a product – it's actually an entire experience, during which you have the opportunity to build and maintain a relationship with your customer.



By having your customers notice the extra love and care in their packages, you are marketing to their emotions and connecting them to the product before they even see it. This is a great opportunity to deepen your connection with your customers and establish your brand even further.

Delighting and attracting your customers with a positive unboxing experience is one of the most important stepping stones to encouraging customers to purchase from you again.





Here are a few tips on how to deepen your connection:

- Handwritten notes to express your appreciation
- Personalized Thank You cards
- Customer service contact information
- The story of your company and your products
- Stories of how others have used your items



Spark engagement with your brand by customizing your boxes with your colors, style, and message. This will help you compete with leading brands and deliver excellent (and memorable) customer service. A video of your customer unboxing their order could very well become viral on YouTube.

Unboxing Videos

As of publication of this ebook, there are over 70 million YouTube videos showing users engaged in an influential unboxing experience. As a brand, this can be a great opportunity for free exposure to your products. When viewers see an enjoyable unboxing experience on video, they are more likely to look for your brand over similar products without unboxing videos.



Be Unique and Specific

The most successful companies and manufacturers understand their packaging is not just a means of transporting a product to a customer. They know packaging can complement the product and the brand.

For example, Apple's white branded boxes create an experience that is unique and specific to Apple. Their boxes display a simple and sleek design that features a real photo of whichever product is inside.



Here's another example of a great branded experience by August Ink, who sells hand-printed lifestyle clothing.



Photo taken by August Ink

In this photo, you can find August Ink's lovely display of personalized packaging, including branded stickers and tape.

Andrea Daniel, founder of August Ink said, “Packaging has definitely been an evolving process for me! Since I sell small batch hand-printed apparel, I want to make sure people feel like they are getting something special when they receive their order. The tape and stickers are just one little way to do that. It shows that I care enough to pay attention to the details. It helps me build my brand!”



Even the smallest of companies can use Apple and August Ink as inspiration in their pursuit of delighting their customer during the unboxing experience. It doesn't have to be an elaborate, over-the-top process; it can be a simple and straightforward approach and have a powerful effect.

The physical touchpoint when the package reaches the hand of the customer acts as a direct connection that can successfully compete with an interactive brick-and-mortar experience. Once you recognize the unboxing experience is more than just opening a box, you can create a strategy to bring out the life of your brand.

YOUR

COMPANY

YOUR

CHAPTER

5

PACKAGING
PART I:



**THINKING
OUTSIDE**
the **BOX**



COMPANY

YOUR

COMPANY



Thinking Outside the Box

First impressions matter. The out-of-the-box experience you provide your customers should be designed to stand out. It will determine how the customer interacts and feels about your brand.

By taking the right steps, you can make your packages significant and shareworthy.

All Things Boxes

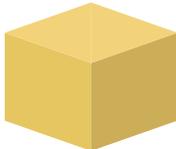
Pro Tip:
If you use a mailer envelope, be sure put a sticker with your logo on it to contribute to your branding efforts.

Ecommerce merchants traditionally have two options for shipping containers: boxes and mailer envelopes.

Corrugated boxes, also known as “brown boxes,” are made from recycled materials, making them eco-friendly. Based on their strength and flexibility, these boxes are durable and can be stacked for easy and economic transporting.

Because corrugated boxes are a natural brown color, you don’t have to print or process the box into a desired color which makes this boxing method less expensive.

Box Types



Cube Corrugated Box



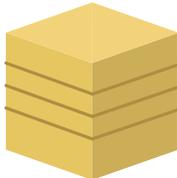
Flat Corrugated Box



Tall/Telescopic Corrugated Box



Long Corrugated Box



Multi-Depth Corrugated Box



Although boxes are more widely used, there are advantages to using mailer envelopes. Mailer envelopes are less expensive than corrugated shipping boxes, and they occupy less space on a truck or in a warehouse. Additionally, there's less labor required because envelopes don't need to be assembled or taped.

Protective Cushioning

Whether your packaging needs packing peanuts, foam fillers, bubble wrap, air pillows, or paper fillers, protection is necessary. These materials will protect your package from damage while being shipped.

As an added bonus, eco-friendly packing can improve your brand's image. Biodegradable shipping peanuts and paper fillers make a sustainable difference because they are easily recycled.

When your customers learn you use sustainable packaging products, they will see your company as a responsible and an environmentally-friendly brand.

Note:

Materials made of polystyrene foam or styrofoam can't be reused and aren't biodegradable, which can be harmful to the environment.

Box Branding

Presenting your company information as well as order and shipment details on the box is a given – the branding elements are what to be excited about.

Whether you decide to keep it simple or go big, the colors and designs you choose for your boxes are a great way to create a “wow” experience. As long as you stay consistent with the your entire box design, it will help to promote your brand.

The moment the box reaches the customer is a prime brand engagement time. This first-touch experience is what will set you apart from the competition. The way the customer feels about your brand, defines your brand. Utilize this opportunity by offering a monumental out-of-the-box experience.



Graphics

Personalizing your shipping boxes can make a significant impact on a customer's first impression. **Fun and colorful designs and logos on the outside of the box can complement the awesomeness of the product inside.**

Hanna Lim, a founder of Lollaland, an infant and toddler goods company, uses branding on their boxes to effectively connect with their customers.



“As small business owners, it’s important to create awareness around our brand at all times. That’s why it’s important to use branding on as many customer touch points as possible.” - Hanna Lim, Lollaland

Attach the Love

For some companies, the tape might be the last thing in mind when thinking about branding. But every branded detail makes a big difference.

Go above and beyond with little effort by using branded tape and stickers to add an extra touch of love to your packages. You can customize the tape with your company colors and logo.



August Ink attaches these stickers to their boxes to make the unboxing experience extra special. They also use this space to promote their company name along with contact information.



Photo taken by Andrea Daniel

Colors

Colors have an effect on people’s emotions, which means the colors you choose to be a part of your brand can make or break your ability to form connections with customers.

 Bold	 Optimistic	 Friendly	 Exciting
 Creative	 Trusting	 Peaceful	 Calming

The graphic above describes how a customer feels and perceives your company. The colors you incorporate into your brand is a personality component and assists in shaping your identity.

Shipping Labels

Branding on your shipping labels might seem like a small detail, but it adds to the overall branding and professionalism of your company.

Add your company's logo and a personalized message to your shipping label for increased brand visibility. Your label messages can be as simple as saying, "Thank you for your order" or include product information instead. This personalization is up to you.

Pro Tip:

Use shipping labels as a creative way to display your brand and messaging.

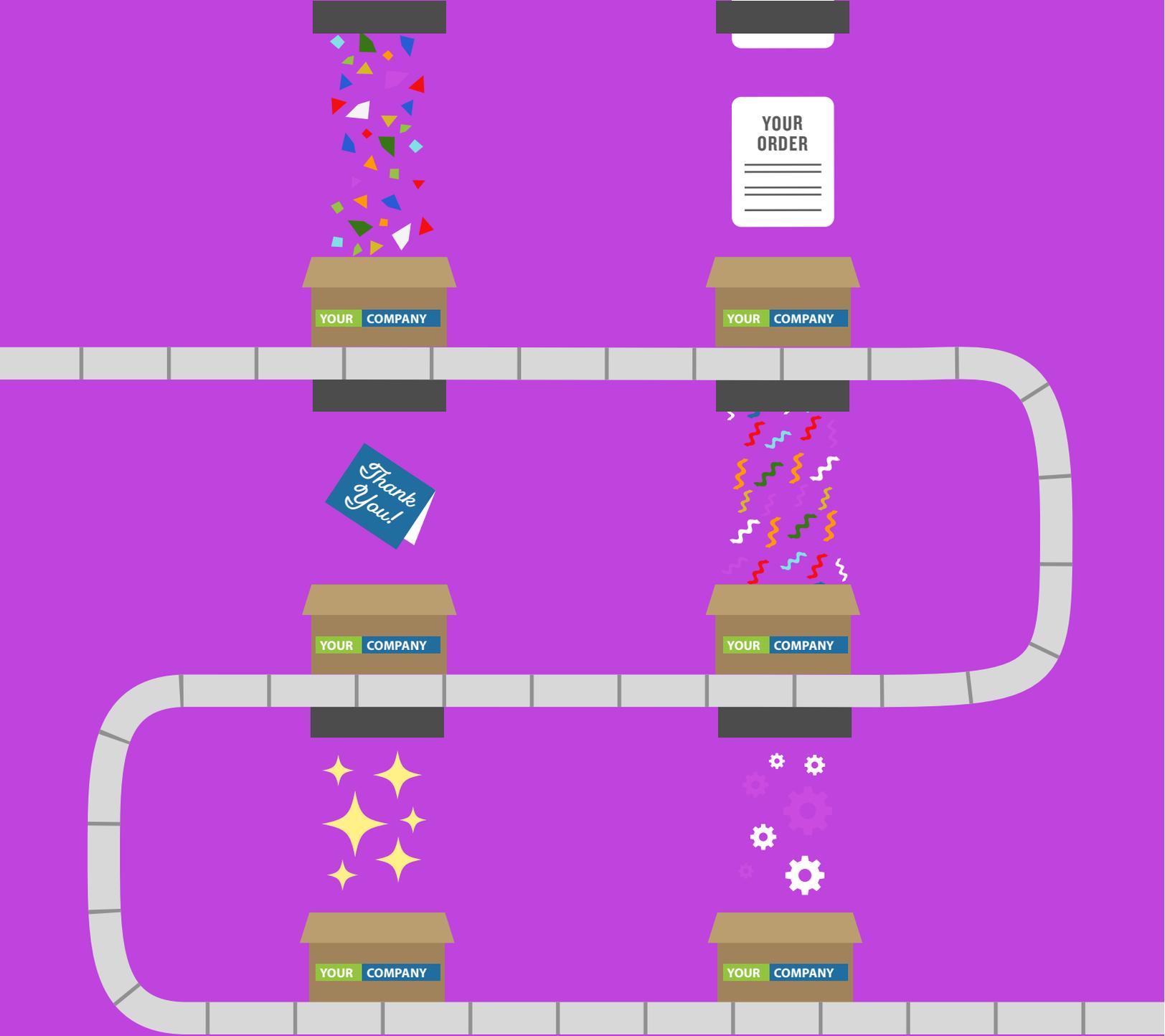
eCom Label Solutions

[eCom labels](#) can help bring you to the next level. Picture a 6-panel shipping label that works as both a label and marketing material. It's a simple set up with your account through ShipStation and the rest is up to you.

Include coupons, offers, invoicing, return policy, educational content, product catalog, gift messaging, and extras that benefit your customer.



Example of eCom label from Paleo Treats



CHAPTER 6:

PACKAGING PART II:

Thinking Inside the Box

Thinking Inside the Box

As many of us love to say, it's what's on the inside that counts. This is especially true for branding the inside of your shipping boxes.

Creativity and strategy will help drive the process of inside-the-box branding. ***Fun designs, decorations, useful information, and thoughtful messages are important to delight your customers.***

Designing the box can be as simple or detailed as you'd like. It should be appealing to your audience, stay relevant to your branding style, and not distract from the overall inside-the-box branding.

Pro Tip:

Make the unboxing experience for your brand stand out to make your product feel unique and exclusive. The emotional appeal of each insert will bring customers back.



The inside of the box is prime branding real-estate. The exterior of the box can get dirty or scraped in shipment. But the inside acts as a canvas for your creative designs and useful information.



Personalization Opportunities

The information you include in your box will keep your customers informed of updates, new products, and other similar items they might be interested in. You can also increase revenue by strategically promoting sales and offering discounts to further delight your customers.

Express your appreciation by adding personalized notes and free gifts that can take your customer service to the next level.

Branded Packing Slips

Packing slips are one of the most informative inside-the-box items. Keep your customers notified of key shipping details including the order date and box contents.

Using packing slips to share your company information such as your return policy helps customers better understand their responsibilities in the transaction.

If you're wondering where the customization comes in, there are multiple ways to brand your tracking slips:

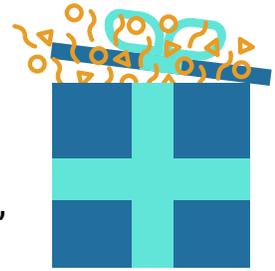
- ▶ Give your customer a visual of the product that awaits them inside by displaying a product image
- ▶ Promote other products and sales by conveniently offering discounts and coupons
- ▶ Keep your customers informed of your policies by disclosing your return policy

A packing slip is just one of the many items you should include inside your boxes. Explore more options for promoting your products and increasing a connection with your customers.



Promotional Items

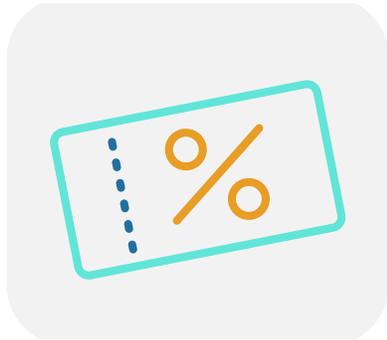
Promotional items such as discounts, product samples, and gifts are effective. This gives your company the ability to gain new customers, receive feedback on new products, and increase customer loyalty.



Entrepreneur³ offers great insight on the benefits of promotional incentives:

“Promotions work especially well when consumers are in need of a jolt to take buying action. Just be clear about what you want to achieve. Set the number of sales you want to ring up, dollars you want to bring in, customer names you want to collect, buying patterns you want to change, or any other objective you want your promotion to achieve. Then determine what your desired change will mean financially to your business.”

Discount Offers



One of the biggest benefits of using discounts in your promotional strategy is to further establish brand loyalty. Keep your existing customers coming back by including discount promotion ads in their shipping box. You can choose between giving them a percentage off their next purchase or a discount on a related product.

Another reason for offering discounts is to drive your sales volume up. As long as you have a metrics strategy in place, this can help your business profit. Here are a few tips to making this successful:

- Target your discounts to the right audience
- Don't offer discounts too frequently, as this can impact the perceived value of your product
- Test which products sell the most with the discounted price

³Three Steps to Effective Sales Promotions, Entrepreneur, 2010

Product Samples

Giving customers a product sample will allow them to use the item without risk. If they are happy with the product, they can order it. But if they're not a fan, they wasted no money. This tactic can also help spread the word about your product to shoppers who might not be aware of it.



If you're concerned about the costs associated with providing free samples, limit the number of samples you offer. You can send products to your highest-spending customers or new customers to entice them to buy more products.

Once the customer has received the sample, reach out and invite them to leave comments on your product review pages or social media accounts.

You can also ask your customer to share the product with their own social network and use your personalized hashtag. Then share their post on your social media page to show your audience how others are using your product to increase engagement.

"Thank You" Cards and Gifts

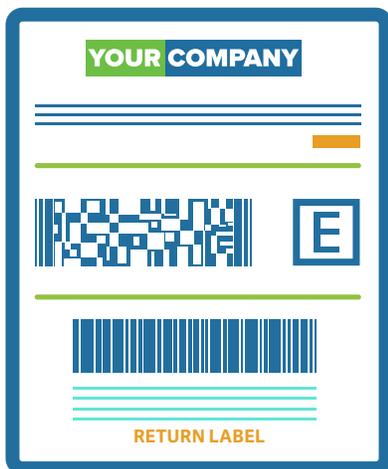
Nothing quite compares to a personal "Thank You" note. As online interactions seem increasingly automated, it's important to handwrite the note for a powerful impact. A little goes a long way— and in this instance, it will go for miles.

Pro Tip:

Include a "Thank You" note to make customers feel special and ask for a review in return.

You can also make an impact on your customers by giving them a gift to thank them for their continued loyalty to your brand. Pick random customers that have a large social following and then send some company swag. They will in turn tell their friends about your brand, promote your company around town by wearing the swag, or post photos on their social channels.

Offer a Return Label



There are a number of benefits that come from giving your customers a return label to return a product on their own. Consider including a return label inside the box if you sell a product that may be regularly exchanged or returned, like shoes or apparel.

You can also offer a quick and easy returns process to all of your customers (or just for specific products) with a branded returns portal. You allow your customers to initiate the returns process themselves and create a return shipping label on-demand. This will cut down costs of including return labels inside outgoing shipments. We'll explain more in the next chapter.

Easier Returns Create Loyalty

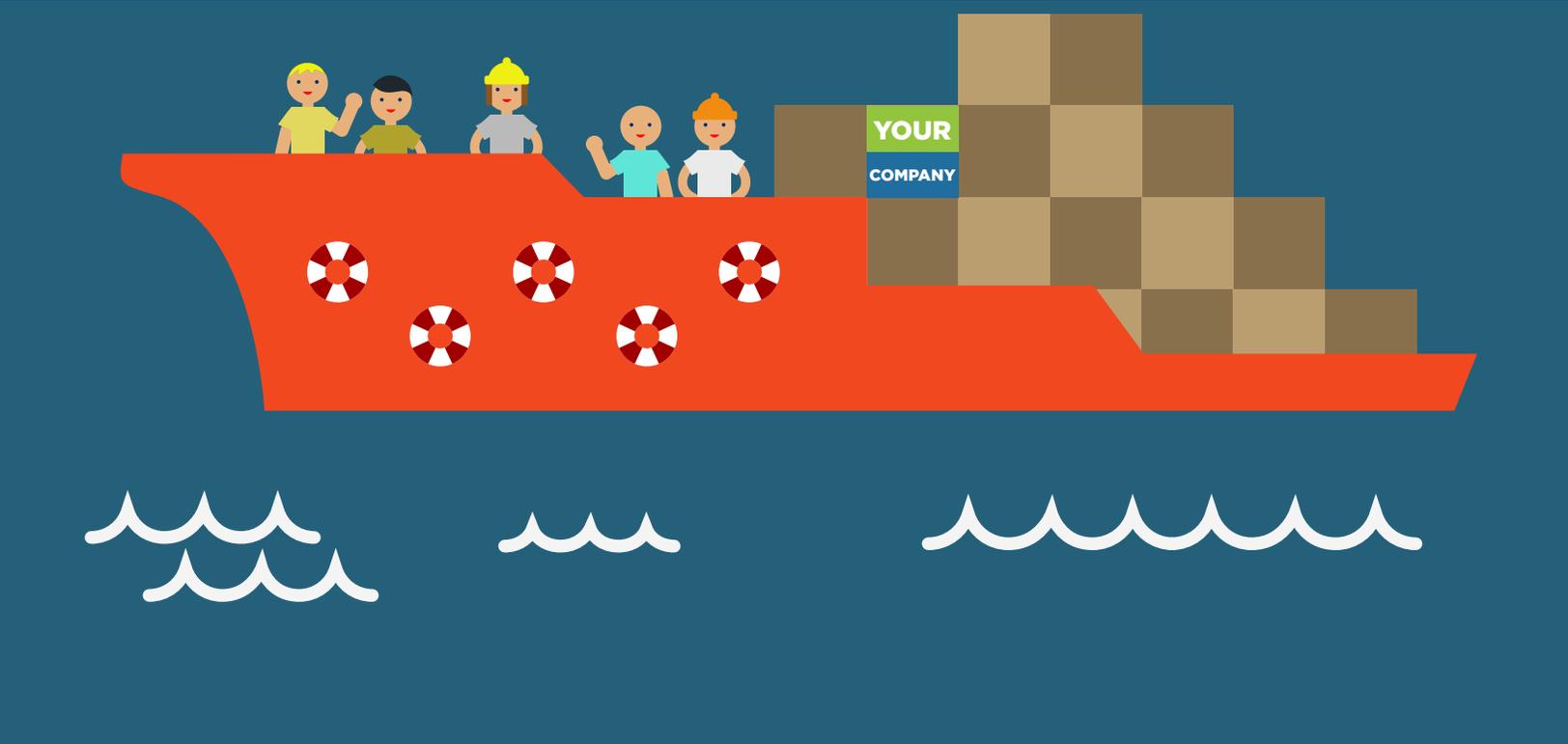
A study by Practical Ecommerce shows⁴ **62%** of consumers want a returns label in the box. You might think that this method could increase the amount of return requests you receive, but this actually boosts customer confidence and further develops your loyalty.

Strive to create the most value inside each of the boxes you send out.
The more you strategically promote your brand and express customer appreciation will help to increase your sales and better your relationships.

⁴Package returns Infographic, Endicia, 2013

CHAPTER
- 7 -

Returning
ON BRAND





Returning On Brand

The returns policy you offer your customers can make or break your brand loyalty.

The reasons customers return orders can vary widely. By learning why they do, you can identify patterns and create an action plan to reduce the number of returns you receive.

Why Customers Return Orders

Here's a list of the most common reasons why customers return their products:

- ▶ *The customer bought the wrong item.* Because the customer didn't have the chance to try on an item or test it out, it's understandable if they buy the wrong size, color, or style. Decrease the amount of returned merchandise by updating your product descriptions to be as detailed as possible.
- ▶ *The product didn't match the description.* Avoid increased returns by taking precautions in the writing process of your product descriptions. Review and edit the description to highlight the product and be as accurate as possible. Don't use text that can be misleading.
- ▶ *The customer didn't need the product.* It's difficult to determine the exact reason why the customer suddenly doesn't need the products they ordered. To get more insight, ask them to provide additional details about their decision to return their order. If you notice a pattern, you can make the necessary adjustments to your site.

Unfortunately, not all returns are preventable, but you can still create a great return policy to keep customers happy and connected to your brand.





Building a Successful Return Policy

Keep your return policy as transparent as possible. Use easy-to-read language that everyone can understand. Don't fill your returns policy space with legal jargon or complicated language. This can lead to confusion that can prompt the customer to flood your email and social platforms with questions, or leave bad reviews.

Creating an effective returns policy might seem like a tedious task. **But the way you handle your returns is important to your customer and the relationship you're building with them.** With the right strategy, this process can be made simple. Here's a list of things to consider before choosing the best return policy:

Pro Tip:

Most shoppers say they will buy from a store again if the returns process is easy.⁵

Understand What Your Return Policy Is

Understanding the details of your company's return policy will allow you to present it to your customers in an easy-to-understand manner. It also shows you pride yourself on providing excellent customer service. Knowing the components to what makes an effective returns policy for your company is crucial.

Align Your Returns Policy with Your Online Store

Research the return policies of other successful companies and test them out to learn which method works best for your company. If you're researching a returns policy and can't find one that quite fits your criteria, customize it.

Remember that your returns policy makes a large impact on your customer's buying decision. Adopt or customize a returns policy that best caters to your customers and make it a priority.

⁵E-commerce Product Return Rate – Statistics and Trends [Infographic], Invesp, 2016





Returns Policy Visibility

Promote your policy throughout your site and disclose important details. The details should include:

- The timeframe to let your customers know how long they have to return a product
- Requirements – for example, all items must be unopened or tags need to be attached
- Fees, in case you don't cover shipping or restocking fees
- The method(s) of return you allow – for example, allowing a full refund or only store credit



Shopping Cart Abandonment

An abandoned cart occurs when a customer adds their desired products to their online shopping cart and leaves the website without purchasing the items. This is a huge hurdle for companies because 69% of all ecommerce visitors abandon their shopping carts⁵.

The primary reasons customers abandon carts are:

- Shipping cost is too high
- The return policy is not beneficial to them
- There are obstacles navigating the website

Providing a great shipping and returns experience can work to decrease the amount of shopping cart abandonment. Evaluate your shipping method to make sure you're providing the best possible customer service.

Although persuading every customer to return and purchase the products in their abandoned cart could be challenging, it's worth the effort if it leads to increased sales.



Making Your Returns Policy Even Better

If you're wondering what specifically constitutes a great returns policy, here's some inspiration:

Free Returns

Providing free returns is a show of confidence in your brand. Let your customers know that you believe in the quality of your product by offering a free returns policy. In turn, your customers will feel more confident and you will experience less shopping cart abandonment.

This is an example of how easy and customer-friendly Zappo's free returns policy is.



Zappos customers get **FAST, FREE SHIPPING** on every order with **NO** order minimums!

VIP and **Zappos Rewards** customers – just **LOG IN** to access all your benefits, like **FREE** Expedited Shipping and your **EXCLUSIVE** customer service phone number! Details below.

[LOG IN »](#)

If you are not 100% satisfied with your purchase for any reason, just go through our easy online return process, or call us 24/7 at (800) 927-7671 to print out a **FREE** return label.

You have **365 DAYS TO RETURN*** an item to us in its original condition.

*Returns must be unworn, in the state you received them, and in the original packaging. Some items ship with an attached security tag. Merchandise returned without the original security tag attached or a damaged tag may not qualify for a refund.

They pride themselves on their customer service efforts and offer incentives like free returns to keep their customers satisfied and coming back. Adopting a free returns policy helped Zappos grow to be worth over a billion dollars.

Free returns offer long-term benefits for both you and the customer. While you stand out from the competition, you're positively impacting the customer's buying decision and making them happy in the process.

Return Policy Extension

Giving your customer more time to return their items will also allow your customer to have more confidence in their buying decisions. Plus, you won't actually be receiving more returns.

Customer-Initiated Returns

One of the most hassle-free and easy-to-manage return policies is offering customer-initiated returns via a branded returns portal. The customer has the ability to print out their own shipping label and initiate their return.

While you're locking down your returns policy, make sure to consider all of your options. Assess the benefits of each so you can have the most powerful effect on your customer loyalty.

Pro Tip:
Save time and automate your returns process with ShipStation's Branded Returns Portal.

The critical parts of a branded returns portal include:



- Company logo and brand colors
- Product photos
- Brand return policy
- User-friendly order lookup
- Choose line items and quantities
- Provide trackable reasons for return
- Easy to create a return label

CHAPTER 8:

Delivering YOUR BRAND





Delivering Your Brand

Congratulations! You've learned how to effectively market your brand in a way that will provide a positive experience and establish a strong connection between you and your customers at every step of the shipping process. Now it's time to create an action plan.

If you're just getting started in ecommerce, hone in on branding your website, logo, and identity. Your branded shipment method and assets should become a primary goal. **This ebook can effectively help you plan your attack and make your branding part of a comprehensive shipping strategy.**

For those of you that are more experienced in ecommerce and have knowledge of current trends, use this ebook as a tool to revisit your current efforts. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you have any holes in your branding?
- Is there something you're missing that can be of value to test out?
- What can you do to revamp your current assets?

Start by going through each step and taking notes on what concepts and details you want to include in your strategy. Reference the branded shipping checklist below to make sure you've upgraded each step:

- The best shipping method for your store
 - A plan to effectively communicate with customers
 - A creative and unique outside of the box experience
 - Beneficial assets to include with your product
 - A mutually beneficial returns policy
-



Brand of Your SHIPPING

Shipping

- Optimize shipping prices
- Offer flat and simple shipping rates
- Offer free shipping with a cart threshold
- Calculate shipping rates for precise charges

Tracking

- Send tracking notification emails
- Send delivery notification emails
- Engage on social media
- Get a branded tracking page

Unboxing

- Get branded boxes, tape, stickers and supplies
- Branded packing slips
- Branded shipping labels
- Include notes, coupons, samples, gifts, and flyers

Returns

- Build great return policy
- Make return policy easy to access on website
- Get branded returns portal
- Offer free returns



Try ShipStation

There is a multitude of tools, assets, and customizations you can utilize through the Brand Dead Zone to inspire engagement and delight your customers through the shipping process. Among the most valuable resources to assist you in this quest is the ShipStation software.

Get Branded Shipping

ShipStation can help get you organized and empower you to create a unique customer branding experience by enabling you to display your shipping details in an innovative and creative way. The best part about these tools is that they're effective, simple to setup, and easy to manage.

Start bridging the gap between you and your customers with an unforgettable experience today.

Happy Branding!

– ShipStation Team

Not a *ShipStation*[®]
customer yet?

Start Your Free Trial