

Retailers continue to roll back free returns

Article

The trend: Retailers are ramping up the use of final sales to get rid of merchandise gluts and reduce returns in one fell swoop.

- Even secondhand sellers are using the tactic to offload unwanted items: The number of clothing items marked as “new with tags” and “final sale” on **Poshmark** is up 61% since 2022, per The Wall Street Journal.

An industry-wide challenge: Shoppers will return **\$211.76 billion** worth of online purchases this year, 4.2% more than in 2022 per our [US Retail Ecommerce Return Volume forecast](#). With

ecommerce returns volumes hovering above prepandemic levels, many retailers are moving away from generous returns policies as a way to cut costs.

- **Roughly two-thirds (66%) of retailers charged for returns as of March**, up from 60% in September, per goTRG.
- Even **Amazon**, long the poster child for free delivery and returns, now charges customers \$1 for [returning items at UPS stores](#) if there is a closer returns point, such as a **Whole Foods** or **Kohl's**, nearby.

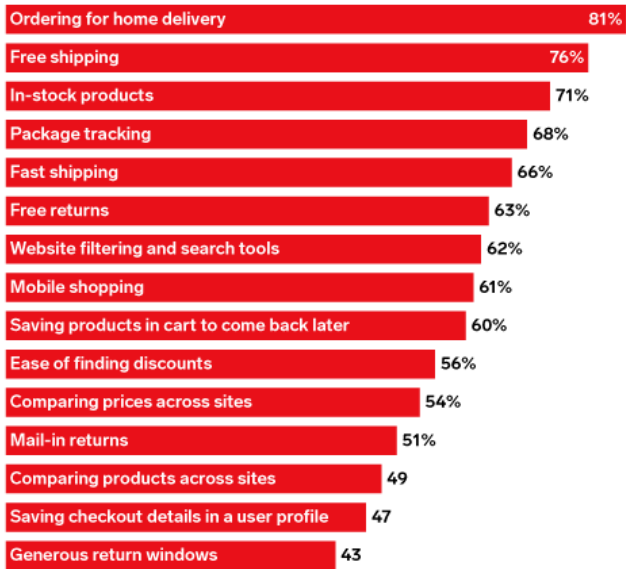
The big picture: While retailers are understandably keen to find ways to shift merchandise that won't increase pressure on their bottom lines, making it harder for shoppers to return items could end up backfiring, even for offers of a significant discount.

- The overwhelming majority—87%—of shoppers say they would be likely to stop shopping at a brand or retailer that no longer offered free returns, [per](#) a PowerReviews survey. Free returns also ranked as consumers' second most important online purchase consideration.
- Given consumers' cost-consciousness, eliminating the possibility of a return or exchange could make shoppers even more reluctant to go through with a purchase.

Go further: Check out our [US Retail Ecommerce Returns](#) report.

Online Shopping Attributes That US Adults Believe Are Necessary for Convenience, Dec 2022

% of respondents



Note: among those who said they shop online because it's convenient

Source: Morning Consult, "The State of Retail & Ecommerce: H1 2023," Jan 27, 2023

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