

REVERSE LOGISTICS magazine®

Serving the Automotive, Health Sciences, Retail, and High Tech Industries



Edition 64



OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
REVERSE LOGISTICS
ASSOCIATION®

**Conferência e
Exposição sobre
Logística Reversa
no Brasil**

De 16 a 18 de Setembro

à Patrocinado pela "Reverse Logistics Association"

- Participação de profissionais de todo o mundo inclusive da América do Sul e Central
- Principais OEMs e Varejistas estão procurando por empresas terceirizadas para prover serviços de gerenciamento e administração do processo de Logística Reversa nesta região.

Programa-se agora mesmo para aprender com os especialistas em Logística Reversa e aproveite para fazer um network com outros profissionais do ramo

Para maiores informações, visite: www.rltshows.com/brazil.php

www.RLashows.org

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by Paul Dvorak

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Articles



Why Customer Service Can Make or Break Your Reverse Logistics Strategies

by Peter Sobotta of Return Logic

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It might seem strange to consider customer service as a factor in your reverse logistics strategies. After all, a customer doesn't have much if anything to do with warehouse procedures or issues like refurbish, restock, or resale. So in what way does customer service factor into your reverse solution?

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What is the Reverse Logistics Association?

by Reverse Logistics Association

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Message from the Editor

This edition has a variety of articles, but a few of these articles seemed to all fall under Retail covering E-Commerce, Customer Service, and Retail returns. As a mom of 2 1/2, one of my least favorite tasks is shopping WITH children. It's never easy to have children in tow when having to get shopping done, but there are a few stores that make this task easier for me. When

customer service goes above and beyond just the customer service counter, but also offers to help me find items, help load bags in my car, or even tries to brighten my child's mood when having a breakdown, in addition to giving stickers to them as we leave the store, I will return; but when that store also makes returns FAST and easy, I am a committed shopper! There are few stores that I regularly shop at because of this reason, and therefore, I handle some of my shopping online as well. It's much



easier to get some shopping done while my children are occupied or asleep, but I'm still selective on my e-commerce shopping sites. Easy and free returns are usually a priority for me, but also ease of finding items, availability and price are key factors. Online shopping has become so easy, but returning can be just the opposite. When my husband bought some snow boots this past winter, from an "unknown" site, he had to return them after trying them on because they weren't the right fit. This cost us an additional \$15+ to return the boots (shipping and handling and a restocking fee), so basically

we paid \$15 for a pair of boots we didn't keep. I said, why didn't you buy them from Zappos?! Even though one can often find shoes a little cheaper on other sites, with Zappos' free returns (up to 365 after the purchase price), it's still cheaper to not have to deal or worry about the returns. Zappos and some other online retailers make this process easy for you by sending you a return label via email or mail, and even have the option to have USPS or UPS come to your home or office and pick up the returned package. It can't get much easier than that.

Thank you,
Felecia Przybyla
editor@rla.org



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to educate and inform Reverse Logistics professionals around the world. RLA focuses on the reverse logistics processes across all industries. No matter the industry — High Tech, Consumer Electronics, Automotive, Medical/Pharmaceutical, Food and Beverage, Apparel, or other — our goal is to provide RL process knowledge to all industries. We want to educate everyone about the Reverse Logistics processes that are common to all industries and

to be a catalyst for innovation in developing and implementing new RL processes. We have been and will continue to provide our services to the industry at a moderate price.

Managing the latest information in services such as repair, customer service, parts management, end-of-life manufacturing, service logistics, field service, returns processing and order fulfillment (just to name a few) can be a little intimidating, to say the least. Yet that is exactly

what the Reverse Logistics Association provides through our membership services. We serve manufacturers and retailers in a variety of settings while offering ongoing updates on market trends, research, mergers and acquisitions and potential outsourcing opportunities to 3PSPs. We have gained the attention of 3PLs like FedEx, DHL, USPS and UPS. 3PSPs like Teleplan, Foxconn, Flextronics, Canon, Sony and Jabil, along with small- and medium-sized service providers have found that

RLA resources help advertise their services to a regional and global audience. OEMs like Microsoft, HP, RIM, and Sony, along with Retailers like Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire, Tesco and Best Buy all participate at our events. Through RLA Events, RLA Connect services and our publications — RL Magazine and the Weekly News Clippings email — we help OEMs, ODMs, Branded and Retail companies find service partners and solutions providers that were previously unknown to them.



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- Kenneth Turner, Hewlett-Packard





Message from the Publisher

COLLABORATION IS CRITICAL

I just returned from our RLA Conference and Expo in Italy. It's amazing to me to see the interest in Reverse Logistics and the process of remanufacturing from the automobile industry. We learned so much about the **Basel**

Convention and the impacts that this could have on all devices no matter what industry.

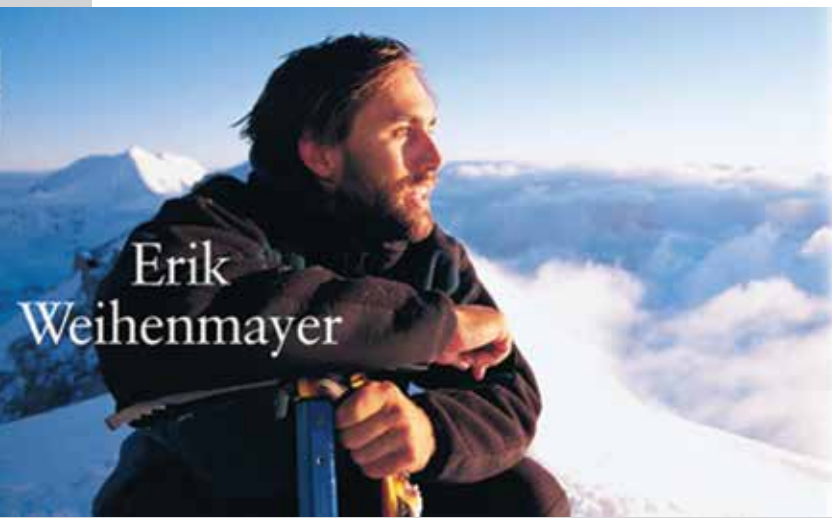
RLA is very actively collaborating with other industries and event management companies in order to co-locate more people together in the same location at the same time. Our first experiment with this was in Italy last month when we worked with APRA in Rimini, Italy.

We're working with REED, Movimat, Abralog, VUC Expo, Transporte & Logistica and the Conferencia Nacional De Logistics for our September event in Sao Paulo, Brazil. There will be over hundred and twenty exhibitors and 25,000 attendees at our combined event with the other logistics, warehousing and supply chain organizations. Make

sure you visit the [Reverse Logistics Pavilion](#) in the center of the exhibit area and made sure your register for the [conference sessions](#).

We hope that you focus on this important market in South America. Come prepared to speak Portuguese and in this platform in Sao Paulo, Brazil where you'll rub shoulders with Reverse Logistics professionals that will make a big difference in your future business savings.

Best Regards,
Gailen Vick, Founder & Publisher
www.RLA.org



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A Board of Advisors comprised of industry experts has been set up to monitor and assist the Reverse Logistics Association management team in making informed decisions. Advisors include:



Dr. Mark Ferguson – University of South Carolina, Dr. Mark Ferguson serves as the Director of the Sustainable Enterprise and Development Initiative. Dr. Ferguson has worked in the reverse logistics area for over ten years; teaching classes on reverse logistics topics, consulting with companies and providing thought leadership of the area through his research.



James H. Hunt IV – GENCO Technology Services, Jim is the Senior Vice President, Business Development for GENCO Technology Services. He has responsibility for account management, new business sales and solutions development. He joined GENCO in July 2012.



Charles Johnston – Home Depot, Charles Johnston is Director of Repair and Returns at The Home Depot Chuck was with WAL-MART for the past 14 years and his responsibilities include Returns, Imports, Exports, Tires and Printing and Mailing Distribution.



Troy Kubat - Walmart, Troy is now the Director of Logistics Engineering-Grocery at Walmart having worked is way up from Director, Logistics Operations, Industrial Engineering Manager at Walmart - International Division and Japan Expatriate - Logistics Operations Lead at Walmart - International Division



Thomas Maher - Dell, Tom Maher joined Dell in 1997 and is the Executive Director for Global Service Parts. Mr. Maher is responsible for service parts life cycle support in over 100 countries. Mr. Maher's global service parts responsibilities include: planning, procurement, distribution, returns, repair, inventory management, supplier



management and parts disposal. These operations support 100% of Dell's warranty customers across all Business Units and all Product Lines.

David Moloney, Google, David Moloney, as Senior Manager of Reverse Logistics & Business Systems, is an operational leader with technical focus, a technical leader with operational focus: "I flip between both roles as circumstances require. I build operations for consumer electronics startups: business model, process, legal framework, international expansion, NPI, PLM, sourcing talent, forward logistics, contact centers, reverse logistics, wireless certification, online and backend systems, knowledge management, sleeve rolling-up."



Ian Rusher - Cisco Systems, 20 Years within Supply Chain Operations, of which the last 15 Years have been spent in reverse Logistics. Previous experience running 3Com EMEA Warranty/Service Repair Operations, Responsible for both Internal and 3rd party repair operational performance and Engineering support.



Ian Towell – Tesco, Responsible for end to end accountability for the non food returns business within UK Tesco, focussing on improving quality, policy application, asset recovery and logistical flow.



Susan Wackerman – Hewlett-Packard Company, Susan Wackerman is currently a Sr. Operations Manager in the Americas Supply Chain for HP's Imaging and Printing Group. In her position, Susan is responsible for the Recycling Operations for HP Americas and the Returns Operations / Remarketing for HP Americas Imaging and Printing Group.



Reverse Logistics Association Industry Committees



Industry Committees are set up to provide a standing forum for Reverse Logistics Professionals to meet on a regional and global basis and discuss common Reverse Logistics issues at the RLA Conferences & Expos. Industry Committees educate the industry on reverse logistics:

- “Best Practices”
- Consumer Satisfaction Issues
- Regulations on a Worldwide & Regional Basis Processes that can Reduce Costs

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How to Set Up an E-Commerce Reverse Logistics Framework Strategy for the Industrial Space as Proven By the Retail World, (Part 1 of 2)

by Adam Robinson of Cerasis

E-Commerce Reverse Logistics is Something You Must Consider as you take your Products Online

If you run an e-Commerce store or are thinking about putting your manufactured, re-manufactured, or distribution catalog online, product returns are unavoidable. Reverse logistics in an e-commerce environment is a challenging part of your business.

Customer service is essential to getting and keeping your online customers. The handling of your customer product returns is an essential component of your customer service program.

In order to effectively deal with product returns you need to ensure you are addressing not only the needs of your customers, but also the needs of your company to ensure you are minimizing the cost and impact of the returns

on your company since they can have a very significant impact on your profits.

The goal of this post is to help you to assess and improve your e-Commerce Reverse Logistics. To assist you to better understand e-Commerce Reverse Logistics, this post starts by outlining some key e-Commerce Reverse Logistics facts and findings. The report then outlines an e-Commerce Reverse Logistics Framework you can use to assess and analyze your operations. Each key item of the framework is discussed in detail to outline the key issues and review some best practices examples from some of the best know e-Commerce companies.

Do know that a lot of the research around e-commerce is centered around retail, or direct to consumer. There are not yet a ton of information on manufacturers and



Do know that a lot of the research in e-commerce is centered on retail, or direct to consumer. There are not yet a ton of information on manufacturers and distributors who ship larger freight that is better suited for less than truckload or full truckload e-commerce freight shipping solutions quite yet, but the strategies of the customer experience and e-commerce reverse logistics will still have the same trends and applications.



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distributors who ship larger freight that is better suited for less than truckload or full truckload quite yet, but the strategies of the customer experience and e-commerce reverse logistics will still have the same trends and applications.

E-Commerce Reverse Logistics Facts and Findings

A considerable amount of research has been performed to understand e-Commerce buyer behaviors. From this research, a considerable number of findings have emerged related to the customer's ability to return goods.

Customer Behavior

"Merchants will need to pay close attention to building return policies that are customer friendly," said Paul Bates, vice president of Information Products Group for BizRate.com. "Online buyers tell us every day that the key to winning their loyalty is the level and quality of customer support." (Source: Bizrate.com Survey). Other relevant findings from the BizRate.com research are:

- Eighty-nine percent of online buyers say return policies influence their decision to shop with an e-retailer
- The three leading products returned were clothing (27 percent), computer software (20 percent) and books (15 percent).
- Certain attributes of return policies can actually drive potential customers away. These include:
 - o the inability to receive credit on a credit or debit card (85 percent)
 - o time limit to return products that is "too short" (68 percent)
- Other attributes that online buyers consider important are:
 - o whether the merchant allows products to be returned by mail (66 percent)
 - o the ability to exchange a product for another item (58 percent)
 - o Sixty-two percent of consumers said they would prefer to return products by mail instead of traveling to a brick-and-mortar store.

E-Commerce Reverse Logistics Framework

In order to assess and analyze your e-Commerce Reverse Logistics you need to understand the key components for effective e-Commerce reverse logistics.



Adam Robinson oversees the overall marketing strategy for Cerasis including website development, social media and content marketing, trade show marketing, email campaigns, and webinar marketing. Mr. Robinson works with the business development department to create messaging that attracts the right decision makers, gaining inbound leads and increasing brand awareness all while shortening sales cycles, the time it takes to gain sales appointments and set proper sales and execution expectations.



Read the Press



Innovation In Waste Prevention Initiative Launched

3 June 2014 – Kirklees businesses have been urged to band together with councils, charities and voluntary groups to prevent waste with grants of up to 50,000 available to partnerships with the most innovative ideas.

[Full Article](#)

Refind Refines Sorting System For 'Frontrunners'

2 June 2014 – Sweden: Sorting specialist Refind Technologies has launched a new system platform containing both software and equipment components for custom development of 'advanced identification' and sorting solutions for end-of-life and used electronics.

[Full Article](#)

Remanufacturing Key To Sustainable Supply Chains

2 June 2014 – Remanufacturing drives sustainability, according to APICS Foundation research that finds 68 percent of respondents say sustainability is the primary advantage associated with remanufacturing and 41 percent already consider it a formal component of their organizations sustainability policies.

[Full Article](#)

Maximize Your Data, Optimize Your Operations

2 June 2014 – Even if your fleet consists of only a handful of trucks, chances are you make hundreds of decisions, including dozens on a moments notice.

[Full Article](#)

Comment: Is Warehouse Automation The Solution?

30 May 2014 – With the rise of online shopping, retail logistics professionals are faced with an increasing set of challenges from their rapidly growing eCommerce fulfilment operations.

[Full Article](#)

GM Provides Rental Cars For Some Recalled Vehicles

30 May 2014 – Right now, General Motors is in a lot of trouble related to the recall that it had to issue on more than 2.6 million cars equipped with a defective ignition switch. As a result of the faulty ignition switches in both personal and rental cars, GM has been linked to the deaths of at least 13 people.

[Full Article](#)

Remanufacturing Key To Growth In Supply Chain

29 May 2014 – New research from APICS Foundation, a nonprofit organization that advances supply

chain and operations management innovation through research, publications, education and talent development, finds remanufacturing serves a broad array of strategic interests for companies, provides considerable career advancement potential for individuals and has become instrumental in furthering sustainability initiatives.

[Full Article](#)

RLA Italy 2014 Conference Presentations now available for Download

28 May 2014—If you couldn't make it to Italy for the recent RLA/APRA Conference & Expo, you can still take advantage of the educational and enlightening Reverse Logistics Presentations that were given.

[Full Article](#)

How HP And Kyocera Are Applying Circular Economy To Printing

28 May 2014 – Despite the advent of electronic media, much of our communication and documentation still leaves a paper trail. The environmental impacts of printing, from deforestation to energy use, remain significantly high and as print equipment manufacturers look for smarter ways to reduce their footprints, the application of product lifecycle analysis is coming to the fore.

[Full Article](#)

Don't Get Burned On Retail Returns Reverse Logistics Of Refurbished Electronics

by Richard Volz of The Recon Group

Too often OEM's/Retailers don't understand the complete cost of returns with each silo focusing solely on their P&L. Viewing the process end-to-end will provide you the facts needed to determine the best course of action....continue accepting returns, out source the refurbishment/re-marketing process, or provide an allowance instead of accepting returns. Attached is a info-graphic to help you understand what the industry is faced with and the size of the prize for considering the best possible solution for your business.

spent working with customer returns, Richard was able to lead the area to 100% increase in recovery, increased inventory turns to +40x's/yr, implemented the refurbishment process used today, and developed/launched Best Buy's current on-line auction process.

Today, as Recon's VP of Business Development, Richard continues to use his experience in Inventory Management, Buying, and Asset Recovery to help Retailers and OEM's find ways to improve their performance of returned product while strengthening their brands.



Richard Volz, Director of Business Development

Richard's started his career with Target as a Business Analyst dealing with apparel. Responsibilities included planning, managing, and developing growth categories. After 6 years of various responsibilities, Richard joined Best Buy as a Senior Buyer of Appliances. During his 5 years in this position, Richard oversaw the doubling of Sales volume to \$1 Billion annually while increasing profitability by 25% on a mature product category.

In 2003, Richard was asked to help improve performance in Best Buy's Asset Recovery Department. In the 6 years

PRODUCT RETURNS COST THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY BETWEEN \$14-16 BILLION EVERY YEAR

COST OF HANDLING CUSTOMER ELECTRONIC RETURNS



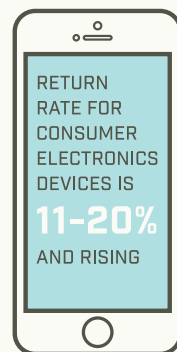
5-6%

OF TOTAL REVENUE IS SPENT BY MANUFACTURERS



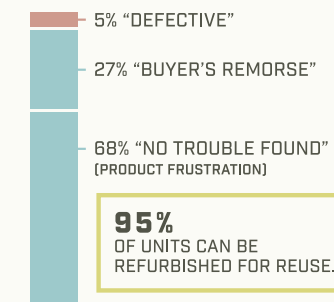
2-3%

OF TOTAL REVENUE IS SPENT BY RETAILERS



RETURN RATE FOR CONSUMER ELECTRONICS DEVICES IS **11-20%** AND RISING

REASONS WHY CUSTOMERS RETURN PRODUCTS



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Monday offers pre-conference workshops with our RLA Charity Golf Tournament. Tuesday adds more workshops along with industry reports and then in the evening, our Awards Gala. Wednesday opens with the keynote address followed by sessions presented by Reverse Logistics professionals, leading academics, and industry leaders.

The Expo where 3PSPs will showcase their RL services and solutions.



REVERSE LOGISTICS ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE & EXPO



If you are a Reverse Logistics professional – don't miss this event!

RETAILERS AND MANUFACTURERS ARE LEFT WITH BILLIONS OF WORKING, YET NO LONGER "BRAND NEW", ELECTRONICS

COSTLY MISTAKES:



SELL EVERYTHING
"AS-IS"



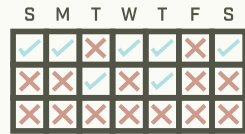
SPENDING MORE
ON FIXING
& SHIPPING THAN PRODUCTS
ARE WORTH



LACK OF
RESALE CHANNELS



SELF-COMPETITION
IN PRIMARY VS SECONDARY
MARKETS



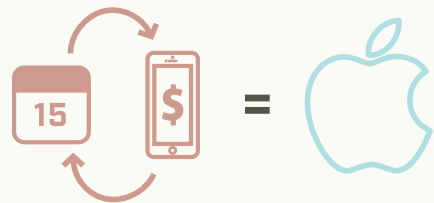
POOR FORECASTING
& REPORTING ON PRODUCTIVITY
OR CAPACITY



E-WASTE LIABILITY
NO CHAIN OF CUSTODY,
NO DOCUMENTATION ON
CHAIN OF CUSTODY

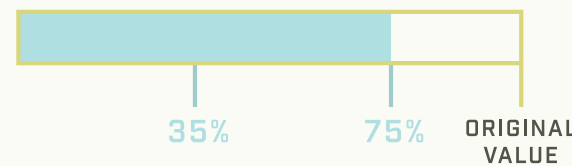
RETAILERS/MANUFACTURERS OFFSET RETURN LOSSES BY RESELLING IN THE SECONDARY MARKET

"SECONDARY MARKET ELECTRONICS SALES REPRESENT AN ESTIMATED **\$15 BILLION (PER YEAR)** MARKET IN THE UNITED STATES."

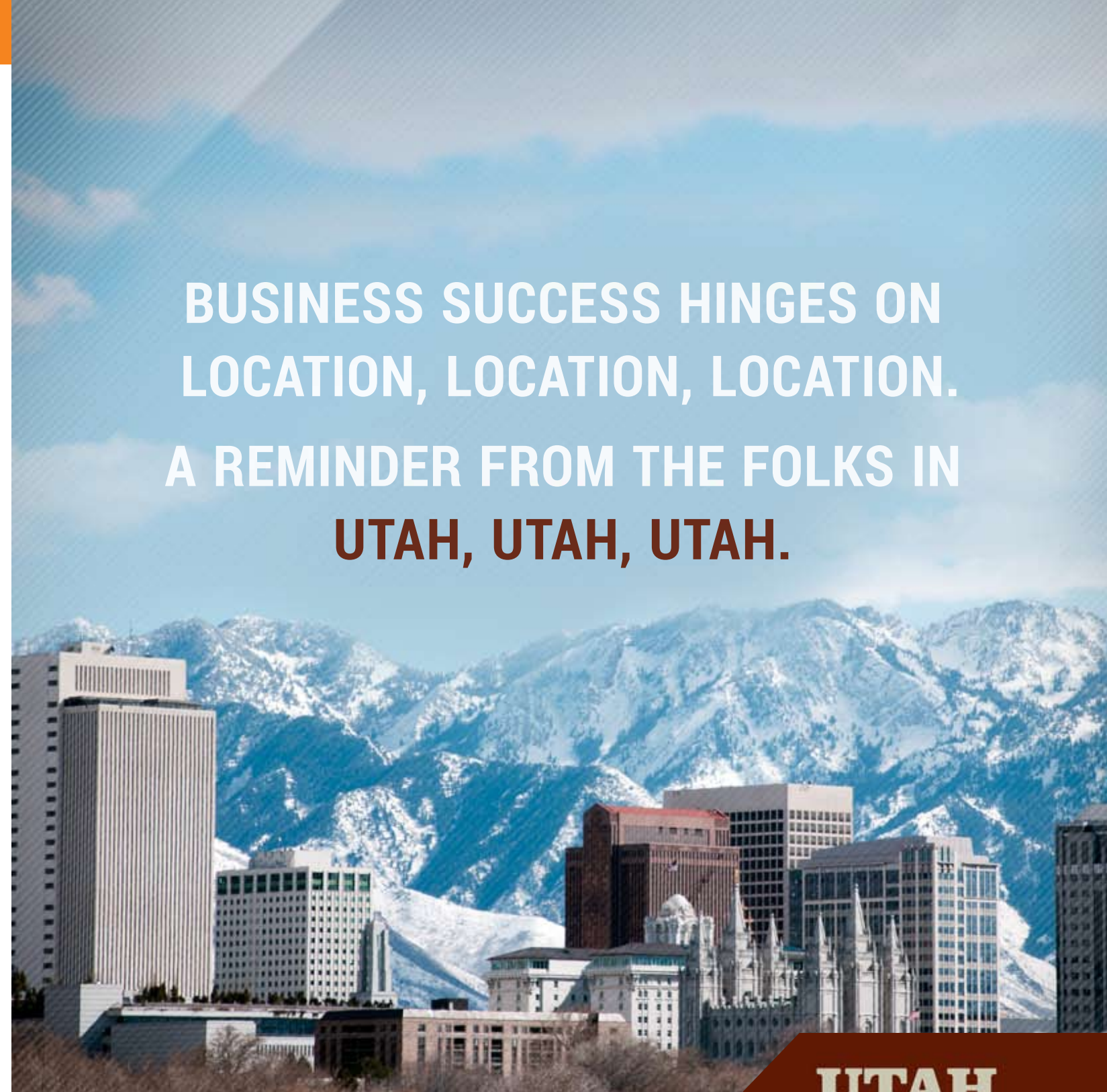


THAT'S EQUAL APPLE'S TOTAL APP STORE PROFITS SINCE 2008.

DEPENDING ON REFURBISHED CONDITION, THE AVERAGE ELECTRONIC RESALE PRICE IS **35% - 75%** OF THE ORIGINAL VALUE.



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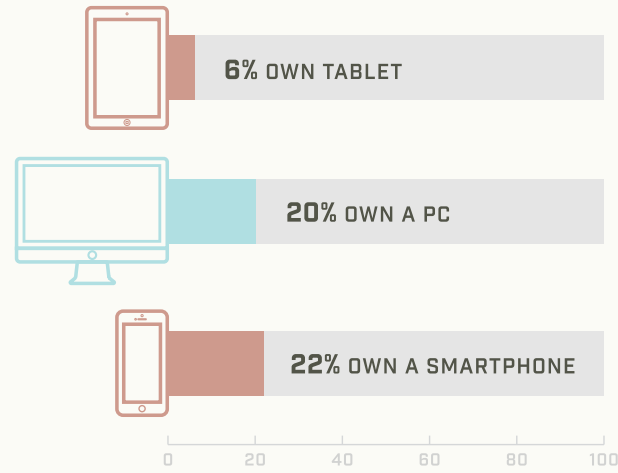
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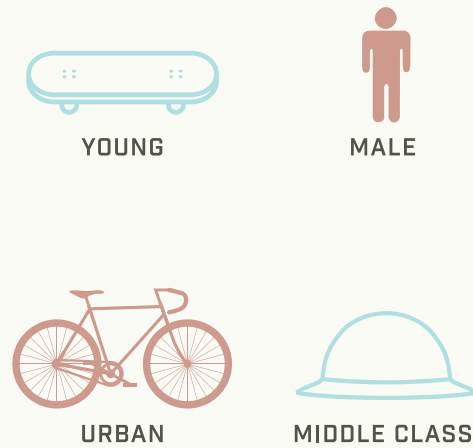
WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO PURCHASE REFURBISHED ELECTRONICS?

EMERGING MARKETS MANY CANNOT AFFORD NEW DEVICES

GLOBAL POPULATION DEVICE OWNERSHIP:

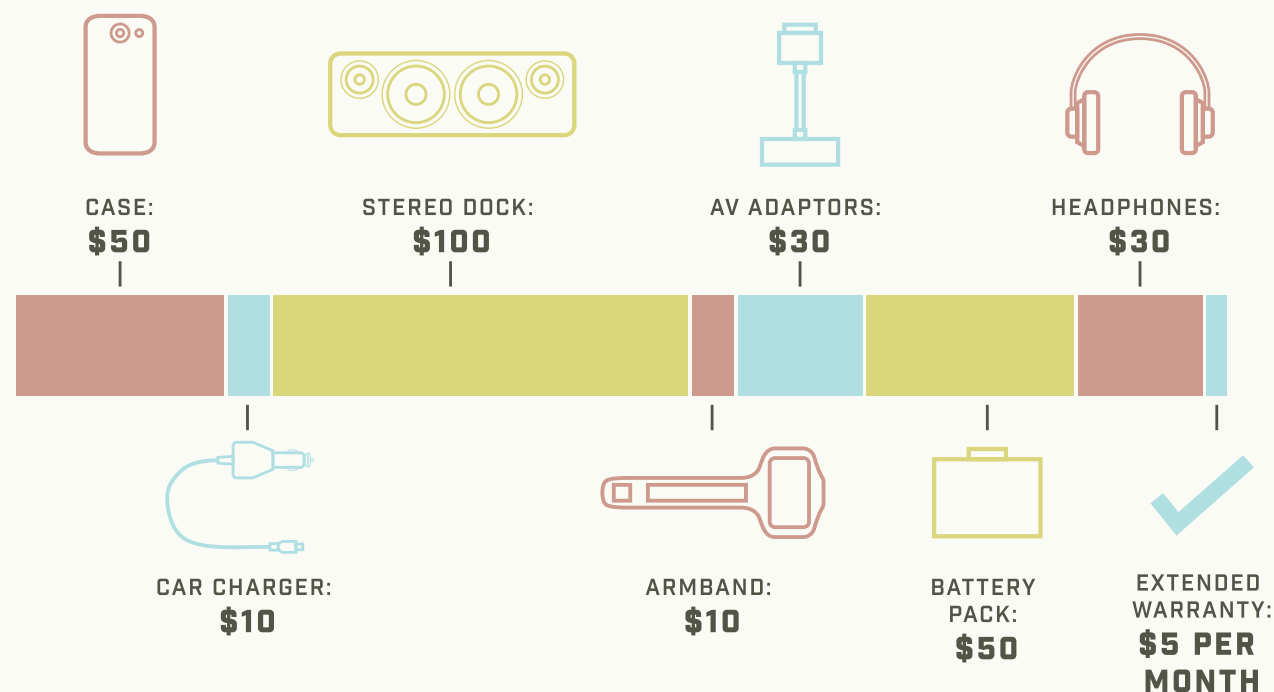


MOST LIKELY TO PURCHASE REFURBISHED PHONE DEMOGRAPHICS:



RETAIL ADVANTAGES: SELLING THE BASKET

NEW SMARTPHONE OWNERS NEED NEW ACCESSORIES
SELLING THE BASKET: PHONES REQUIRE ACCESSORIES:



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RESALE REQUIRES REVERSE LOGISTICS AND REFURBISHMENT CAPABILITY

REVERSE LOGISTICS:
OPTIMIZED AFTERMARKET ACTIVITY TO RECOVER THE MAXIMUM VALUE FROM A PRODUCT AFTER THE INITIAL POINT OF SALE

SUPPLY CHAIN:

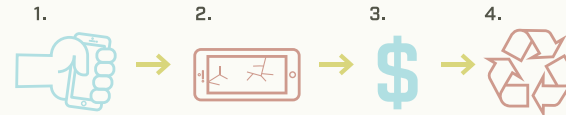


1. Raw materials
2. Shipped to manufacturer
3. Item shipped to retailers
4. Item in consumer's hand

REVERSE LOGISTICS COSTS ARE LESS THAN 4% OF TOTAL SUPPLY CHAIN COSTS FOR MOST COMPANIES, WHEN DONE RIGHT.



REVERSE LOGISTICS:



1. Items returned to retailer/manufacturer in a variety of conditions.
2. Companies only refurbish to the level investment can be recouped. This will create A/B/C grade, refurbished units.
3. Recovery is maximized by having customers for all grades of refurbished units. This prevents price erosion caused by over saturating a single grade or customer capacity.
4. Unfixable units are harvested for working parts and then recycled for reuse in the manufacturing process.

WHAT IS THE REVERSE LOGISTICS ASSOCIATION?



To view this video without iTunes:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmqPO4r5XF4>

At this year's RLA Conference & Expo in Las Vegas you may have noticed a television crew roaming around. The crew was there to capture response to the conference and make a video that displayed the essence of the Reverse Logistics Association. They were also filming segments for a new video series in RL Digital magazine called RLA Rewound. As you view it, you may see some familiar faces. A big thank you to everyone who took time out from their busy conference schedule to stop and talk with our reporter. We hope you will share the video with friends and colleagues as you introduce them to the association and explain what we do and how we can support them. Stay tuned, because we may be talking to you for the next series of videos for RLA Rewound.

Industry Events

RLA Conference & Expo: São Paulo 2014
September 16-18, 2014

RLA Conference & Expo: Mumbai 2014
December 10-12, 2014

2015 International CES
January 6-9, 2015

Reverse Logistics Workshops: 2015 International CES
January 8, 2015

RLA Conference & Expo: Las Vegas 2015
February 2-5, 2015

Europe - Amsterdam
June 14-16, 2015

Trends in repair services 2014

by Paul Dvorak

After a wind tech identifies an ailing component on a turbine, the natural reaction is to replace it with a recommended version from the OEM. But when they stop supporting a turbine or a complex outsourced component, maintenance crews are forced to look elsewhere. Those OEM business decisions have initiated the rise of repair services.

A growing trend in the larger O&M scheme of things has wind turbine maintenance companies looking for repair services to support their work. Commonly repaired components include printed

repaired part is as good as the old part. More than simply repaired to OEMs specs, the companies say they have taken the time diagnose the problems and improve on original equipment. The most common product upgrade performed, according to the company, is to printed circuit boards. One ISP says that when it is working on a Clipper Xantrex Matrice, the company provides new cables, cleans and machines heat sinks so they adhere tightly to a new waterproof gasket, polishes IGBT mating surfaces for an improved thermal junction with the heat sink, adds fault protection circuitry to the advanced IGBT driver modules, and uses a new generation of IGBTs.

Upgraded components – This is the big trend. One engineering service enhances legacy components with newer, more reliable technology to improve performance and extend the component’s life. The company says it uses the latest diagnostic tools to detect failures down to the microchip.

Two widely used products that get upgrades are the GE 1.5 MW S Series Xantrex Matrix Inverter and the Clipper 2.5 MW Xantrex Inverter. These drop-in replacement designs let wind farms supplement shrinking inventories with more dependable, longer-lasting products, while keeping the turbines online. The effort is to provide comprehensive remanufacturing services for unsalvageable, obsolete components.

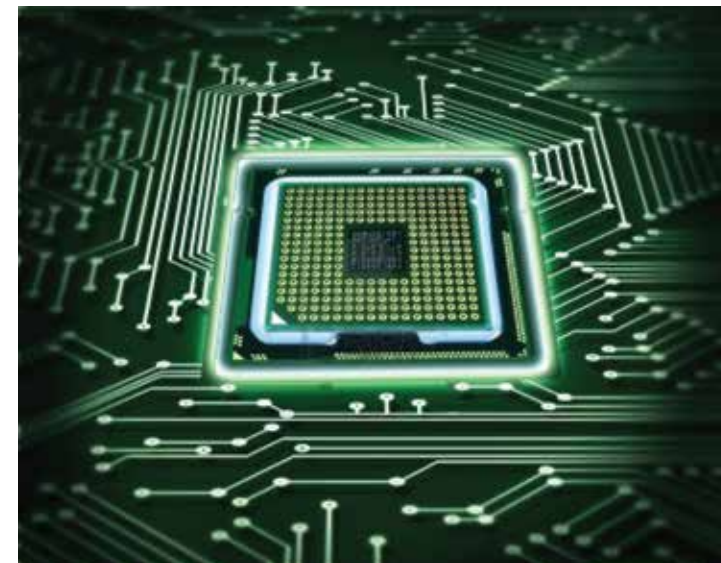
Modifications to products can result in universal fits where, for example, left and right hand design were



circuit boards, pitch drive systems, inverters, IGBTs, PLCs, VRCC units, AEBIs, proportional valves, hydraulic pumps, pitch and yaw motors, encoders, slip rings, transducers, and more.

This trend toward rebuilt parts is becoming more pronounced because the independent service providers (ISPs) tend to improve on what turbine OEMs have designed. For instance, one ISP says repair prices are typically half the cost of new parts, a good reason to consider repaired parts. To some extent, OEMs are encouraging the trend when they no longer support their equipment. This encourages repair ISPs to drive other trends, such as:

Rebuild, not just repair – The companies in this space caution that “repair” is general term implying the



once necessary. And when improved parts run cooler, for instance, they tend to run longer so their spares are unnecessary.

Reduced inventories – When components are readily available, O&M crews need not maintain inventories in their own facilities which further trims their costs.

Longer warranties – With improved replacement components, ISPs can warranty more equipment with longer warranties than the original equipment carried. One says it warrants rebuilt parts for 18 months from time of purchase.

Emergency services – These involve maintaining stock of many surplus parts to help clients get their production equipment back up and running. ISPs offers component repair along with engineering services for GE, Vestas, Siemens, Clipper, and other wind turbines. Furthermore, rebuild services are extending beyond electronic parts

to now include hydraulic and precision mechanical components that drive the turbines’ pitch and yaw systems, as well as down-tower electronics.

Article originally appeared on [Windpower Engineering & Development](#) in May 2014.



Paul Dvorak has been editor of Windpower Engineering & Development magazine since its launch in 2009 and has been writing and editing technical magazine for over 28 years. At one time or another he worked on a medical magazine and served as the CAD and CAM editor for a general purpose engineering magazine. Over his career, Dvorak has won several awards for his writing and editorials. He is a degreed mechanical engineer and Air Force veteran. Paul Dvorak resides in Cleveland, Ohio.

PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE

Supply Chain

AfterMarket Supply Chain

FORWARD LOGISTICS

REVERSE LOGISTICS

New Product Development

- Design Development
- Technology Roadmaps
- ASIC Development
- Mechanical Design
- PCB Layout
- Prototyping
- New Product Introduction

Material Management

- Vendor Relations
- Planning
- Procurement
- Inventory Planning
- Component Fabrication

Manufacturing & Distribution

- PCB Assembly
- Box Assembly
- Volume Manufacturing
- Integration
- Configuration
- Final Testing
- Distribution to Customer
- Customer Fulfillment
- Transportation

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AfterMarket Customer Service

- Customer Service (helpdesk)
- Depot Repair/ReMan
- Service Logistics (Field Service)
 - Transportation/Warehousing
 - Spare Parts Management
 - RMA Management
 - Replacement Management
- Refurbishment
- Screening/Count Auditing
- End-of-life Manufacturing
- Remanufacturing
- Fulfillment Services
- IT Process Management
- Recycling
- Scrap/Waste Management
- Gray/B Channel Management
- Warranty Management
- Asset Management
- Sustainability
- Environmental Resources



Turning Field Service Into Great Customer Service

by Derek Bryan of Fleetmatics



Good customer service is vital to any business. And for businesses that rely on vehicles to deliver goods and services, a slick fleet operation can make the difference between happy and unhappy customers. And while happy customers might buy again and recommend your business to others, unhappy ones won't, and, they'll tell others they're unhappy. It's as simple as that.

What customers want is also quite simple. On the face of it, they want you to:

- Be there when you said you would be
- Let them know if anything is going to change
- Arrive with the right goods and skills or tools to do the job
- Respond quickly if anything changes.

A reasonable set of expectations, most would agree. Customers want their appointment to happen on the day and at the time they were told it would. They want their deliveries to arrive on time. Should the UK weather,



as it does, bring a tree down in the road, meaning your driver won't meet the appointment time, they want you to tell them. Not leave them waiting for someone that isn't going to turn up. When you do arrive, the customer wants your technician to have the right skills and the tools they need to do the job first time. And should the customer's circumstances change they want you to be able to rearrange things quickly.

Not meeting these service level criteria will result in customer dissatisfaction, potentially lost customers, and possibly even a damaged reputation for your business.

Yet, even though the expectations may seem simple, meeting, let alone exceeding, them throws up challenges for managers of fleet vehicles. Success hinges on access to good, reliable data. Fleet managers need to know where each of their vehicles are at any given time, how long it will take them to reach their destinations, who is on board each vehicle and how flexible the timetable of their jobs is. With this information management can take decisions that will keep their business operating at peak efficiency and most importantly, keep customers happy.

This is where technology – in the form of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) – comes very much to the aid of the business with vehicles out-on the road. It was first introduced around forty years ago as a navigation tool and is still very useful in giving drivers turn-by-turn directions to get from A to B. Where, indeed, would many of us be without it? The power of new technologies such as ever cheaper mobile communication and cloud, partnered with GPS has meant the creation of fleet management systems that can be used to gain a comprehensive view of vehicle whereabouts and fleet performance. These fleet management systems are a valuable business tool that can help with routing, scheduling, navigation and planning.

If an appointment needs changing, it's not only quicker for customers if you can send the nearest vehicle, it's also better for your business' bottom line to avoid re-routing one from far away. It also helps if you don't have to spend time getting drivers on the phone to make it all happen.



Improving customer service will always be a high priority for the field-service industry. And so GPS enabled fleet management systems are increasingly being adopted by companies aiming for a high-performing, efficient service. And, of course, satisfied customers.



Derek Bryan is Sales director, as well as

a founding member of Fleetmatics. His previously held positions include, field sales manager, director of inside sales and enterprise and public sector sales director. Fleetmatics is one of the fastest growing SaaS companies in the world with over 22,000 business customers and offices worldwide. Fleetmatics is quoted on the Nasdaq as FLTX.

Reverse Logistics Terminology by Industry

Industry Definition		REVERSE LOGISTICS	Life Cycle Management	
INDUSTRY	TERMINOLOGY		After Purchase Life Cycle	
Apparel	Merchandise Returns	EQUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Customer Service (helpdesk) •Depot Repair/ReMan •Service Logistics (Field Service) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Transportation/Warehousing –Spare Parts Management –RMA Management –Replacement Management •Refurbishment •Screening/Count Auditing •End-of-life Manufacturing •Remanufacturing •Fulfillment Services •IT Process Management •Recycling •Scrap/Waste Management •Gray/B Channel Management •Warranty Management •Asset Management •Sustainability •Environmental Resources 	
Automotive & HD	Remanufacturing			
Consumer Products	After Market Supply Chain			
Furniture	Rebuilders/Refurb			
Hospitality	Reader Board Shopping			
Military	Retrograde			
Retail Grocery	Unsaleables			
Space & Aviation	Obsolescence			
White Goods	Takeback's			

Why Customer Service Can Make or Break Your Reverse Logistics Strategies

by Peter Sobotta of Return Logic



It might seem strange to consider customer service as a factor in your reverse logistics strategies. After all, a customer doesn't have much if anything to do with warehouse procedures or issues like refurbish, restock, or resale. So in what way does customer service factor into your reverse solution?

A good customer service department can actually help your bottom line. Without it, you could be losing money or customer loyalty. With it, you might just avoid a return in the first place.

The customer plays a critical role

Imagine that a customer has purchased your widget. The customer can't touch the item because your widget can only be ordered online so they call to ask questions about shipping, color and shape of the product.

On the phone, the representative is pleasant, answers all of the customer's questions and, satisfied with the answers, the customer places the order. When the product arrives, however, the widget they thought was round and purple, turns out to be red and oval.

The widget is different from what they ordered and they want to make a return. Regardless of their prior experience, this critical moment is where customer loyalty is either made or broken.

How to institute a stronger RMA policy

One of the best ways to avoid a loss in customer loyalty during the reverse supply chain is to stop a return from happening in the first place. A returns management authorization (RMA) system is the first place to start. An

RMA means customers call a service representative to discuss the return before receiving authorization to make one.

During that call the customer may be informed of a different set up method for their widget. They're told the widget can be round and purple like they wanted. The customer support rep can walk them through the process.



The customer is happy and your widget doesn't need to be returned after all. By simply managing an RMA process as part of your reverse logistics strategies, you may be able to cut down on returns, see increased profits and retain loyal customers.

How to lose a customer during the return process

Sometimes returns are necessary. Customer service plays a huge role in customer retention during the reverse chain. It can be easy to lose a customer at this time if you fail in these three areas:



1. Being vague about shipping costs and policies. Customers who expect free shipping, but find they have to pay, won't be pleased. Or, if the customer knows it will cost to return but the cost ends up being much higher than they planned, that opens the door to bad feelings as well. Clearly stated returns policies and shipping costs should be included with every item you ship to a customer.
2. Availability of a replacement. Suppose your company does sell round purple widgets but the oval red widget was sent by accident. The customer is not going to be happy to learn they did everything right,

but now you're out of purple widgets. At times like this a solid RMA strategy can help clear up confusion and set the customer's mind at ease.

3. Time to return and refund. This is another area where a customer deserves full disclosure. Including these terms in your sales contract and having an RMA team who is fully aware of your company policies, will work to eliminate customer confusion.

With an RMA strategy and a staff that understands your return policies, the customer is better informed and kept in the loop. They'll feel valued by being included. A customer who feels valued by customer service is more likely to form a loyalty to your company even if they have to make a return.



Peter Sobotta is the founder and CEO of Return Logic, a technology startup focused on reverse logistics and reducing consumer returns through predictive analytics. Contact Peter at psobotta@returnlogic.com or @peter_sobotta.

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Returning Thoughts

The Growing Importance of Reverse Logistics in your E-Commerce Warehouse

by Paul Rupnow

E-Commerce is growing at a rapid pace as more and more consumers are utilizing online and mobile purchasing. The growth of online purchasing is also resulting in the growth of online returns. In fact, many E-Commerce retailers are encouraging consumers to buy and return, to help consumers reduce purchase risk with tactics such as free returns shipping, open returns policy or even “bracket buying” where the consumer buys orders sizes and returns the two that do not fit. This is presenting new and greater challenges for E-Commerce Reverse Logistics teams. Historically, E-Commerce Reverse Logistics has been very “customer focused”, ensuring that the customer satisfaction is high with quick credit, refund or replacement processing. Now however, E-Commerce Reverse Logistics teams must advance their skills and efforts to better plan, monitor, manage and recover maximum value from the returned and “soon to be returned” inventory.

Growing Issues for E-Commerce Reverse Logistics

Customer service is the first priority and must be maintained despite the new policies and practices that

may be resulting in increased returns. Some additional issues facing E-Commerce Reverse Logistics teams are as follows:

“Soon To Be Returned” Inventory – if customers are ordering 3 items and returning 2, there is an incredible amount of corporate cash tied up in inventory that is going to come back at some future date, hopefully soon.

Inventory purchasing decisions - if you buy more new stock to fulfill new orders, you may be faced with too much inventory when all the returns arrive.

Increased Focus on your Warehouse team - you need to work with your Reverse Logistics warehouse, 3PL or 3PSP Returns processing partners to reduce inventory, rapidly process returns and to re-

stock or recover value quickly, likely in an environment of increasing volumes.

Reverse Logistics systems - most E-Commerce return systems are fairly basic and assume the returned unit is still in sealed package and can be returned immediately to stock. However, when your return volume exceeds 100 units a day, a more specialized and dedicated system is required to process a high volume of returns rapidly,



accurately record the returns data and to scan, inspect, assess, receive, sort, disposition, consolidate, palletize and put away returned items that may be in conditions that are not “New in a Sealed box” to find the best way to recapture value from each returned item.



The Need for Speed - 1. Reduce outstanding inventory - if your return rate is high, or if 2 of every 3 products will be returned, you need to process the returned inventory as quickly as possible to get the returns back in to new stock or converted to credit/cash for operations, to reduce cash tied up in inventory that is at the customer, in transit or not productive.

The Need for Speed – 2. To increase value recovery – inventory, especially fashion or electronics has a short life cycle. Returned goods need to be re-stocked and resold while the “buying season” is still on-going or sent to the secondary market while the value is still high. Or if the product can be returned to the manufacturer for credit, ensure these get processed ASAP.

Focus on Recovery – often issues or complexities of Reverse Logistics processing can cause expensive delays or errors. Remember: “it’s about recovery, not about cost” “If somebody will process for \$.10/unit less but cannot properly execute an RTV [Return To Vendor] for a \$500 item, you didn’t save \$.10, you lost \$499.90.” Rob Saper OfficeMax VP Supply Chain Logistics at RLA Vegas 2013

Best Practice Methods to Improve E-commerce Reverse Logistics

Improvements in your systems and processes can help you monitor, manage and improve your Returns processing. Enhancements to your ERP or specialty Reverse Logistics Software can assist you to accomplish this. Some key areas to focus on are:

1. Visibility – real time visibility of transactions, balances, exceptions help you monitor and track your progress whether in your warehouse or at your 3PL or 3PSP Reverse Logistics partners. Visibility is also essential in planning, especially in planning and monitoring “Soon To Be Returned” inventory.



2. Advanced inspection process – ability to define item specific rules, provide the inspector with questions or to create workflow to route the item and collect decision data to help determine the best possible outcome to maximize value recovery.





– provide your vendor partners real time visibility to returns, provide system alerts of issues, and monitor handling and disposition rules at an item level. Close collaboration with your vendor partners will help you both reduce returns and recover higher values.

The E-Commerce Reverse Logistics Opportunity

The issues and best practices above are just a starting point. Reverse Logistic for E-Commerce companies will be a rapidly changing area over the next several years. This will present both challenges and opportunities. Many E-Commerce companies now see Returns policies and effective returns processing as a competitive advantage, so it will be critical for your

team to stay ahead of the curve and ensure you have the processes, systems and tools to be a Reverse Logistics leader.

3. Disposition rules engine - ability for the business team to create receiving/inspection processing workflow or routes for each item that will enable or optimize highest value recovery, including the ability to re-allocate to retail outlets/regions/countries where demand is greater or the secondary market price is higher

4. Warehouse organization - to sort, group, consolidate and store (as short a time as possible) with the ability to distinguish between the same item with different grades or stages of WIP Work In Process. These abilities are often beyond the abilities of a basic WMS. Also in the warehouse, special care is required in handling single units and open box items so not to damage the returned inventory and lose credit from the manufacturer due to damage.

5. Vendor collaboration and agreement compliance



Good Luck!



Paul Rupnow - Director, Reverse Logistics Systems, Andlor Logistics Systems Inc.

Editor - Reverse Logistics Professional Report Business Insights and Strategies for Managing Product Returns

RLA Webinars are hosted and run by each Industry Committee.

Webinars are FREE and available to anyone who registers for the event. These Webinars are held monthly for each Industry Committee. They are 20-30 minute presentations given by a professional in that Industry, and then the opportunity is opened up to webinar attendees to ask Questions and share information relevant to the given topic.



COMMITTEE	TOPIC	CHAIRPERSON	COMPANY
STANDARDS	Developing Standards for Food Safety and Quality during Transportation Processes	Dr. John Ryan	Ryan Systems
RETAILERS	Returns After Christmas: Challenges and Issues	Derek Palmer	Transform
LIFE SCIENCES	Life Sciences Reverse Logistics Best Practices	Gailen Vick	RLA
EUROPE	New Consumer Rights Directive and its impact on Reverse Logistics	Christophe Jeloschek	Kennedy Van der Laan
SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS	Better, Faster Returns Processing & Data Collection Part 2	Roger Levi	Intel
APAC	Major Trends in Sustainability and What They Mean	Bhavani Prakash	Eco Walk the Talk
BRASIL	Impactos da LRS (Lei de Resíduos Sólidos) Nos Processos Operacionais	Orlando Cattini Junior	FGV
WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Rechargeable Battery Handling and Transportation: What Wireless Companies Need to Know	Angelika Kluna	CLi360, Inc.
AFRICA	What is the state of reverse logistics in Africa?	Craig Plowden	Revlogs (Pty) Ltd
DATA STORAGE	Secondary Market for Drives	Tom Burnam	Western Digital
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	Finance is from Mars and Reverse Logistics is from Venus "How we can talk to each other"	Tony Sciarrotta	Reverse It Sales & Consulting



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Reverse Logistics Talk

Importance of Communicating Processes in Reverse Logistics

by Jennifer Bilodeau

In the current economic climate, businesses are looking at creative ways to cut costs, without cutting value and have focused energies in developing repeat business from satisfied customers. Companies are beginning to recognize the financial benefits of investing their resources into returns management to accomplish those goals. The most critical factors in a successful reverse logistics program include customer service, understanding and expediting movement, warehousing, decision-making and assessment, and final disposition. Harnessing technology to create visibility with the organization will coordinate these critical components of the reverse logistics life-cycle.

Reverse Logistics examines a wide range of complex issues involved with managing excess inventory, returns, recalls or defects, and the disposal of obsolete products. In managing reverse logistics, there are many additional steps that must be coordinated to develop a smooth flowing process that will “correlate their reverse logistics expertise and systems to positive impacts on customer service, brand equity, competitive differentiators, and profitability” (Millar, 2012). By strategically planning returns management early in

the supply chain life cycle, processes and procedures at critical points in forward logistics could ultimately reduce the workload and expense associated with managing products as they enter the reverse logistics cycle.

Service Areas

Customer service is the most critical part of the reverse logistics process because of the constant interaction ensuring customer satisfaction. Service areas are critical components, being a clearinghouse for information that can be used to identify new opportunities for continual process improvements across the enterprise.

Companies have invested billions of dollars identifying why a customer does not buy a product or service. United Parcel Service

conducted a survey (2012) utilizing an on-line focus group to determine the effects of reverse logistics and the post-purchase customer experience. The study identified that consumers are looking for retailers that offer on-line services. Consumers are becoming more involved in researching a products and identifying the best possible terms before making a purchase. Competitive advantage



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was last achieved with the birth of “free shipping” that encouraged customers to complete the sale on-line immediately, rather than wait to buy the product at a retail location. This concept evolved into the ability for a customer to decide how soon they want the product, offering multiple shipping options including “pick up” service at a retail location. Customers are now seeking the same flexibility and ease with the returns process. “Retail reverse logistics is gaining consumer attention and could be the next ‘free shipping’ craze, with 42% of consumers reporting they want to see improvements in the on-line returns process” (Supply & Demand Chain Executive, 2012).

Managing customer relationships through a mixture of distinct ways to offer convenience, reliability and support is a critical differentiator to develop new organic business growth. L.L. Bean’s early success was found with word of mouth advertising and customer satisfaction. This was a value that was communicated consistently across the organization. “To hear that one of his [L.L.] products had failed was a genuine shock to his system” (L.L. Bean, n.d.). That fundamental value was instilled in the corporate culture and is embraced

L.L.Bean

at all service levels. Customer service understands the meaning of ‘customer satisfaction’ while capturing critical information to expedite processing of returns. The reason for return is captured and that information is used to begin the returns process. Within L.L. Bean, reason codes identify how the return will be handled through the reverse logistics cycle as well as expedite shipment of replacement merchandise, or credit to the customer. LL Bean offers reimbursement for returns, store credit and exchanges for new orders is encouraged and the entire process of completing the sales cycle simplified for the consumer increasing trust and loyalty. More importantly, customer service identifies the reason for the return while providing superior service, help managers at appropriate destinations prepare for the return to expedite handing.

It is critical to engage employees’ to own their position, participate and become involved in the returns

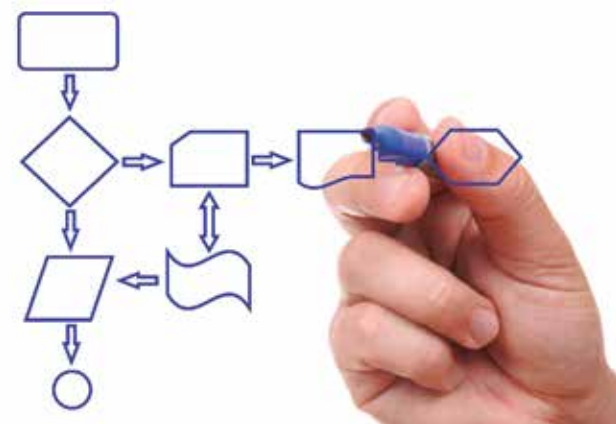
management process to improve gatekeeping. Retailers have voiced concern about service areas either being unwilling or unable to screen the returns process which



identifies the need to take the decision out of their hands and rely on the return management processes to validate and manage that return. Nintendo, a video game manufacturer, experienced an unusually high rate of returns from retailers. The manufacturer identified the high return rate as a result of consumers who were delaying registration until a problem occurred, thus extending the warrantee. The manufacturer incentivized retailers by crediting them \$0.50 for each game unit registered at the point of sale resulting in an 80% decrease in returns (Tibben-Lembke, 1999).

Processes and Procedures

“Communicate how sustainability relates to the company, its products and the industry differentiating what it important from the customer and consumer points of view” (Lovins, 2012). A company must transform the workforce, communicating the commitment to meet reverse logistics objectives identified in the decision



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RLA’s APAC Committee to present three days of Reverse Logistics. Starting on Wednesday, December 10, with RLA Workshops and continuing to Thursday and Friday, December 11-12 with sessions and exhibition.

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making and assessment processes identified. An increase of staff or investment of money into technology will not automatically guarantee increased efficiencies in managing returns.

Developing rules, procedures, instructions, and communications that are applied consistently throughout the enterprise is critical to controlling and automating the returns process. “The positive influence of process formalization derives from its potential to reduce work ambiguity, this reducing managerial and coordination costs, and, at the same time, increasing efficiency of operations (Genchev, 2007). By establishing specific operational goals, a chain of command, establishing what information should identified, and how the return should be handled is the most critical component that will drive the efficiencies of the process.

In developing the decision tree to manage returns, it is critical to understand five basic questions that are the backbone of process development. Why the organization is receiving the product? Why is the product being returned? What is being returned? Who is returning the product? How will the product be returned? By answering these open ended questions, it provide context for developing a knowledge base unique to the organization or industry and provide a framework to begin setting goals and examine opportunities for continuous improvements.



Fig 1. Five basic dimensions of reverse logistics (deBrito, 2002)

The first phase of decision making is strategic, planning for recovery where objectives are identified. A determination is made on how the items should be recovered, and in what capacity. This phase can begin as early as product design. “The issues here are where to locate warehouses, re-distribution plants and so on and at the same time allowing for enough future capacity” (deBrito, 2002).



The second phase is tactical examining the integration of a reverse logistics chain. This is how you determine how the return will be handled and managed.

The final phase of the decision making process is the Operations Planning. “At the operational level, we find production scheduling and control related decisions as the disassembly and reassembly operations” (deBrito, 2002).

Many retailers are negotiating returns management working with vendors to identify the most cost effective terms to manage repair of defects, replacement, or end of life actions. The longer an item remains in the distribution center, the more cost is incurred as the value of the products decline. Once an agreement is negotiated, a plan to communicate and manage the terms of that agreement should be implemented into the standard operating procedures. Visibility throughout the supply chain should not be neglected and the exchange of data within the supply chain should be included as part of the negotiation process. “Companies are moving to a virtual world of contract manufacturing, a new opportunity for sustainable long term growth and competitive advantage” (Anderson, 2009). If returns are sent to an outside entity as part of the contractual agreements without data, a company can lose the competitive advantage that comes from that information. Losing the opportunity to identify quality issues or consumer demand could negatively impact any competitive advantages.

QVC, Inc. contracted with Soleus International to sell 28,000 electric space heaters on a drop shipment basis. QVC was receiving an inordinate number of



consumer returns citing manufacturing defects including smoking, sparking, overheating, and flames. The contract of sale did not provide return solutions, and QVC failed to establish clear procedures for customer service to manage consumer complaints and returns. Frustrated consumers filed complaints with government agencies identifying manufacturing defects that caused the heaters to smoke, spark, overheat, and produce flames. The manufacturer refused to make repairs, or provide restitution to the retailer or their customers. QVC agreed with the governing agencies to initiate a recall, instructing consumers to snip the electrical plug containing the bar code and send it back to QVC for full refund. QVC initiated a lawsuit to recover costs of the faulty merchandise to recover the costs associated with faulty products. QVC received financial relief, but the cost to QVC’s reputation through

poor vendor management and communications with front line customer service not necessarily recovered (QVC, Inc. v. : MJC AMERICA, LTD. : D/b/a SOLEUS INTERNATIONAL, INC., 2011).

“Return initiation, determining the routing for the returned goods, receiving returns at the firm’s facility, selecting the disposition option, crediting the customer/supplier and analyzing and measuring reverse logistics program performance are considered multidimensional processes providing the framework for assessment” (Rogers and Tibben-Lembke, 1999). When rules and procedures are clearly defined throughout the organization, they become knowledge based assets to manage gatekeeping challenges. This creates visibility in the supply chain that will move the decision-making process away from service areas and place it with management to develop continual process improvements. “For example, firms can issue pre-printed shipping labels that specify the contracted carrier(s) to take the decision out of service areas, and the exact location where the return should be set or communicate specific routing policies that cover destination, timing, carrier selection, returned product

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condition, etc., as agreed upon in advance with business partners” (Genchev, 2007).



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Governmental Influences

Although there are laws mandating the disposal, enforcement of those laws are critical to creating deterrents. A study conducted by the State of Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality conducted a survey consisting of 450 businesses and 450 private residents to identify what deters businesses and individuals from violating environmental regulations. 70% of the businesses reported compliance with the laws was not motivated by fines. The monetary penalty for non-compliance

was minimal. The key deterrents were the risk of exposure and negative publicity. The primary concerns were “forced shut downs, environmental damage, criminal prosecution, corporate reputation, community pressure and customer pressure” (State of Oregon, u.d.). 65% of Oregon residents said they would stop doing business with companies that were not committed to the environment.

There are tremendous challenges in security surrounding forward logistics and shippers discussions have been focused identifying and mitigating risk. Businesses should be concerned with security in reverse logistics as well. “Forward logistics is the primary focus for shippers of all commodities, but fine-tuning the “reverse loop”



is becoming more urgent as high-end companies develop new revenue streams focus on reverse logistics and after sales services” (Burnson, 2012). There are a multitude of privacy

laws in place that mandate the protection of personal identifiable information. Shippers are mitigating risk by working with business partners developing visibility and transparency in the supply chain from point of origin to point of destination.

Although many states have implemented strict environmental laws in place surrounding the disposal of e-waste, there has been a decline in proper disposition that is believed to be a result of the economy. Electronics recyclers have filed bankruptcy in recent years due to the lack of work. One of the most significant problems identified by the Environmental Protection Agency was the lack of visibility in the supply chain. “New Jersey passed e-waste recycling laws implemented in 2011 recognizing it was impossible to identify and quantify how many devices were recycled, and how many ended up in landfills” (Siriwardane, 2009). Employers are seeking opportunities to reduce disposal costs and have been exploring a shared responsibility approach. Retailers and manufacturers relied heavily on local communities and townships to manage waste. European businesses are beginning to realize that this may not be the most cost efficient way to manage disposition, seeking opportunities to collect and re-use materials, rather than buy new. “Cross-industry consortia are also emerging where companies with a shared requirement for recycling, but without competitive clash, pool their resources to cost effectively manage their waste” (Elliot & Wright, n.d.)

Conclusion

Reverse logistics is the opportunity to develop a smooth efficient process to manage excess and waste not only recapturing values, but develop clear communications with all stakeholders to improve profitability and the customer experience. By investing a company’s resources into reverse logistics and examining the five dimensions of reverse logistics a valuable knowledge center can be created. The knowledge center will identify the most cost effective ways to manage returns as well as help identify new opportunities to streamline and improve efficiencies.

Having a clear written guideline once the process has



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been developed to identify how returns will be handled is critical. By taking the decision out of the hands of front line sales staff and customer service personnel, their focus can remain on customer satisfaction by communicating concise and consistent information. Setting the customer's expectations from the start of the relationship through post-sales service is a significant component to developing customer loyalty and repeat business. Written procedures and processes are also significant in t developing transparency between the company and their vendors, establishing clear roles and responsibilities and maintain cooperative beneficial relationships.



Although governmental influences play a role in the reverse logistics planning, companies are more concerned with how customers perceive them. Businesses using

transparency and visibility in the supply chain identifying environmentally sound or sustainable practices can use this information as an additional communication opportunity to strengthen customer loyalty, attract new business, and acquire repeat business.

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Jennifer Bilodeau, a Reverse Logistics specialist, formerly supported the Department of the Defense in day to day management of both inbound (return) and outbound distribution of goods throughout the command. She was recognized for exemplary performance throughout the base relocation effort working with internal/external stakeholders managing multiple projects assessing tangible goods for movement to new facilities, acquiring replacement items, as well as recapturing value from left behind products. In this role she oversaw reverse logistics operations including repair and warranties, secondary markets, deconstruction and re-utilization of parts, as well as final disposition instructions.

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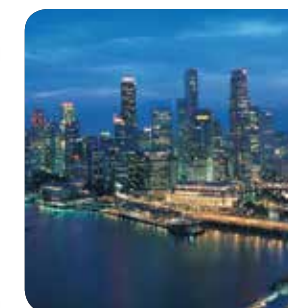
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