Returns Automation Checklist
for Fashion Retailers

The fashion retail world is driven by the explosive growth of e-commerce that's set to reach $7.5 trillion in global sales by 2025.[1]

However, a **significant and perpetual challenge remains: Returns**

The hefty cost of returns and the growing hurdle of bracketing demand an immediate focus on creating an effective reverse logistics strategy.

Whether your goal is faster returns, cost savings, better customer satisfaction, or AI-driven automation, our checklist will help you find the best automation fit to optimize **returns processes.**

01 Customization and Flexibility for Sorting

- Does your current automation solution provide efficient sorting and VAS of fashion items?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Does your system handle a high volume of returned units? (Eg: 120k items in returns putaway)
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Is your sorting process customizable for different SKU types, allowing for improved design criteria?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Do you utilize any kind of robotic systems to manage your returns?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Does your returns management process prioritize Value-Added Services (VAS), such as inspection, cleaning and repackaging?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

02 Picking Process of Returned Inventory

- Is your returns inventory strategically placed closer to the picking stations, to prioritize and expedite the returned inventory for resale?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Does your returns management process ensure prioritized picking of inspection-cleared returned items for new orders ?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Can your system accelerate the picking of returned inventory, potentially achieving 2-4x faster picking times?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

03 Storage and Re-Induction Process

- Does your current automation solution guide you where to store returned goods? (Is it system-directed?)
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Does your system offer dedicated returns processing units with cubby holes for efficient putaway?[2]
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

04 Inventory Management and Visibility

- Can your system dynamically re-slot inventory to handle aging returns and optimize inventory floors?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Does your automation solution have the capability to flag and audit items older than 30 days for removal, ensuring fresh inventory availability?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Does your current automation solution allow for the visibility of returned goods in 3-4 hours (in a single shift)?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Have you conducted a formal ROI analysis for your returns management and reverse logistics strategies?
  - ☐ Yes ☐ No

1. https://www.statista.com/statistics/379046/worldwide-retail-e-commerce-sales/
2. potentially achieving up to 4x faster induction speed compared to traditional methods

↑ Total number of 'Yes' Responses ▭

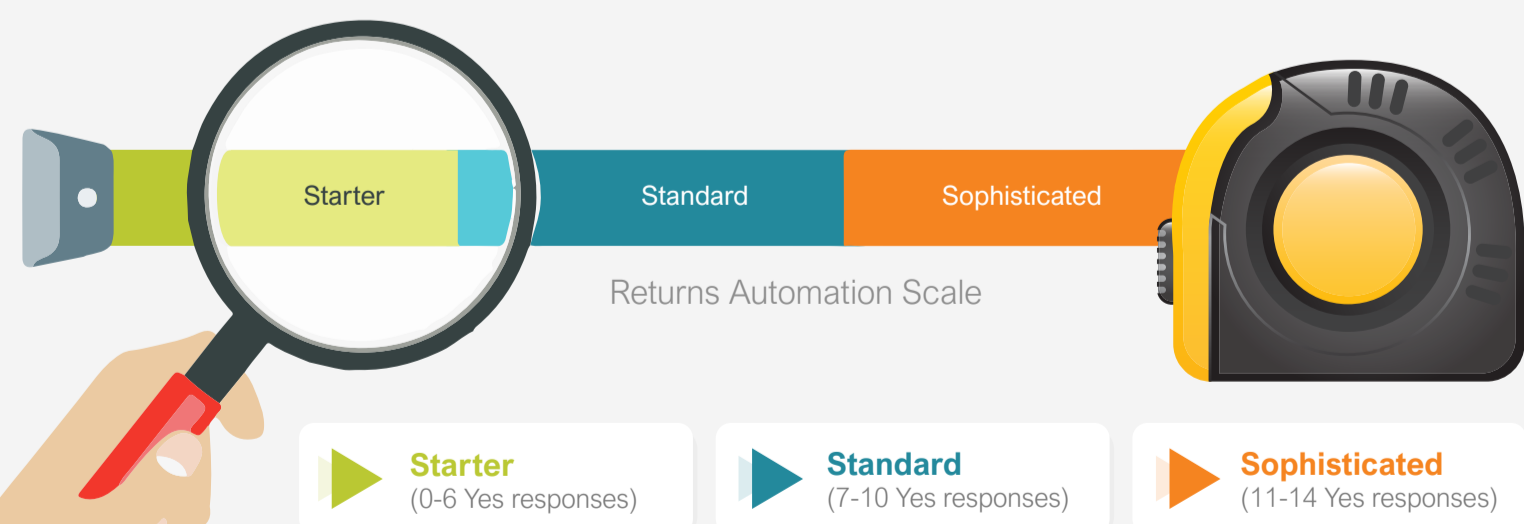↑ Total number of 'No' Responses ▭

Automation Scale

This scale provides a clear way to assess the level of automation needed based on your responses, making it easier to determine the appropriate course of action for your returns processing.

Criteria: Gauge your number of Yes v. No responses and map your returns automation needs using the scale below:

Where You Are Currently

- **You're just starting out.**
  - Manual sorting and user-directed putaway is manually managed
  - Opportunities for improvement in sorting and returns processing.

- **You're making progress!**
  - Some automation with moderate efficiency in QC, sorting, and returns.
  - Room for further optimization.

- **You're advanced and efficient. You are close to being a returns extraordinaire!**
  - Highly automated reverse logistics.
  - Excellent efficiency and customer satisfaction.
  - Utilizes advanced technology and best practices.

Starter | Standard | Sophisticated

Returns Automation Scale

Starter (0-6 Yes responses)

Standard (7-10 Yes responses)

Sophisticated (11-14 Yes responses)

What's Next For You?

- Implement basic automation to enhance sorting, re-induction, putaway, and inventory efficiency.

- Optimize existing automation by adding advanced features for faster returns, accurate inventory management, and improved reverse logistics efficiency.

- Retailers at this stage should focus on continuous innovation through system integrations and best practices to maintain and enhance high efficiency in reverse logistics. Stay at the cutting edge of automation.

If you're looking to tailor reverse logistics to your return goals and optimize operations, let's talk. It's time to say goodbye to unresolved returns draining resources during peak seasons. Real-time processing offers instant visibility and tracking, up to 4x faster. And priority picking can accelerate picking of returned inventory for resale by 2x-4x.

Schedule a Call Today