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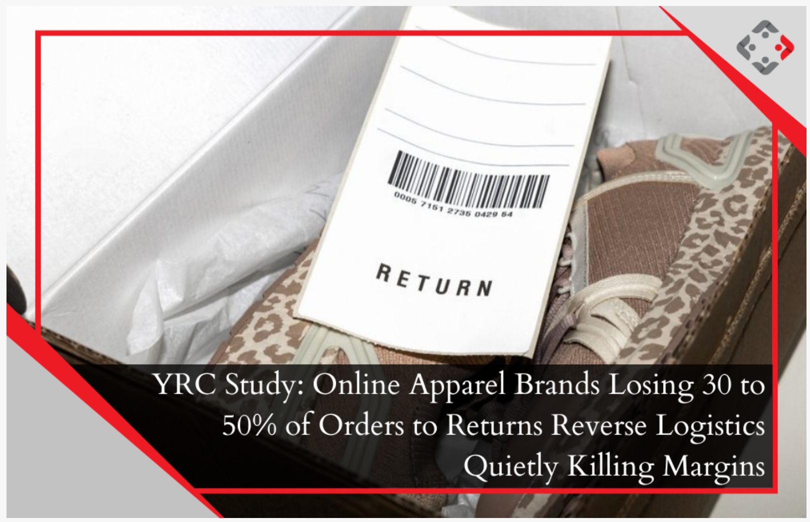
YRC Study: Online Apparel Brands Losing 30 to 50% of Orders to Returns, Reverse Logistics Quietly Killing Margins

A new YRC study traces how reverse logistics drains online apparel profit, with returns claiming up to half of every order placed.



DUBAI, DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, June 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- What if the orders driving an apparel brand's growth are the same ones draining its margins?

For online fashion labels, the order that ships at a profit often returns weeks later as a loss, and the damage compounds with scale. A new study from Your Retail Coach, a specialist retail and eCommerce consulting firm that has advised 500+ businesses across the globe, traces how reverse logistics now consumes 30% to 50% of orders at many online apparel brands, and why the standard return-reduction playbook keeps missing the cause.

> Returns are not a shipping problem. The damage starts in the size chart and the product page long before anything ships back. Fix the listing and the reverse flow shrinks.”
>
> *Rupal Agarwal, CSO at Your Retail Coach*

Online apparel return rates run 20% to 40%, and some fashion segments push past 50% of orders. Poor fit and sizing drive roughly 53% of apparel returns, the single largest cause across major markets. Bracketing, where shoppers buy several sizes and send most back, now accounts for 30% to 40% of online clothing returns. Each returned item costs $10 to $65 to process, and only 48% of returned goods resell at full price. A 25% return rate can erase as much as 70% of contribution margin, far beyond the headline number.

None of this is misfortune. It is the predictable arithmetic of pushing more volume through size charts, product pages, and reverse-logistics flows that simply cannot carry it.

Get advise for Retail Business Consulting : https://www.yourretailcoach.in/contact/

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The study breaks the returns problem into the operational layers where margin actually leaks, then attaches a fix to each one.

-> Returns Diagnostic by SKU and Category: The framework isolates which styles, sizes, and product pages generate the heaviest return volume. Pants alone can account for as much as 65% of apparel returns in a single catalogue.

-> Size Chart and Fit Audit: A structured review of size guides, garment measurements, and fit messaging closes the gap that sends shoppers ordering blind. With fit behind roughly 53% of returns, the largest recoveries sit here.

-> Listing and Merchandising Correction: The framework rebuilds product photography, descriptions, and on-page detail to match what actually arrives at the door, since misrepresentation triggers more than 40% of returns.

-> Bracketing Containment: Policy design, return windows, and incentives work together to discourage habitual multi-size ordering without punishing genuine buyers. With close to 48% of shoppers bracketing, small policy shifts move large volumes.

-> Reverse Logistics Redesign: Drawing on its track record as a □□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□, YRC reroutes inspection, restocking, and refurbishment so recoverable stock returns to sale before it loses value.

-> Margin Recovery Model: A board-ready view ties every return to its true cost and replaces the headline return rate with the contribution-margin figure that actually governs the business.

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Across global markets, free returns and habitual bracketing have hardened into fixed consumer behaviour, and return fees on their own have not reversed the trend. This is the climate pushing □□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ firms to treat returns as a margin problem rather than a logistics afterthought. Retailers who move now can pull recoverable margin back into the business while the fix still outpaces the problem. Those who wait will keep funding a reverse flow that grows quietly with every order they celebrate.

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Your Retail Coach (YRC) is a specialist retail and eCommerce consulting firm that has advised 500+ businesses across the globe, with offices in Dubai, Pune, and Nigeria. The firm works across SOPs, inventory management, store design, HR systems, ERP implementation, and franchise development, and ranks among the clothing consultant companies and □□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ practices building operating systems for modern retail. Every engagement starts from a shop-floor-first philosophy that puts operational reality ahead of theory.

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