

Today, customers shopping online expect a little more from the experience than they did just a couple of years ago, and that extends to the delivery of their order.

What Do Customers Want from Their Shipping Experience?

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As more people shop online, delivering a great experience is even more important for retail and e-commerce businesses.

In the United Kingdom, revenue in the e-commerce market is projected to reach £80,678 million in 2021, according to [Statista](#). Furthermore, it is expected that Revenue will show an annual growth rate of 3.5%, with a market volume of £92,464 million by 2025.

So, the question is, what do customers want from their delivery experience, and how can retailers give it to them. To get those answers, we will look at the stats and trends. But stopping there would be too easy, so we decided to speak with consumers and get their views on what they are looking for in their online shopping and shipping experience.

Here are the top six things customers we spoke with are looking for in the delivery experience:



1 Tracking and Visibility

2 Price and Options

3 Sustainability

4 Free Shipping.

5 Returns

6 Special instructions



Tracking and Visibility

According to a report in [DigitalCommerce 360](#), 93% of consumers want to stay informed throughout the delivery process, from in-transit status to final arrival date. Even more

critical to your brand and delivering an exceptional customer delivery experience, more than 40% said they wouldn't buy from the company again if you don't provide that visibility.



Text and email push communications



Personalized notes from people who handled the package



Pictures of the item in transit and at the point of delivery



“ When it comes to shipping, the thing I find most frustrating is when online retailers’ standards slip,” said one shopper from Cirencester, South West England. “How can you go from offering me free standard shipping that takes three days to 10 days! Not ok!”



Price and Options

“As I shop more online, I want choices of when, where, and how expensive my deliveries are going to be,” said an online shopper. “Somethings I need quicker than others, so I want the option of delivery time and costs—and I want to know them before I press buy now.”

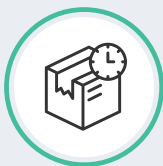


To better meet the increased demands of consumers, between April 2020 and April 2021, the number of delivery options offered by U.K. Retail sites increased from two to three, according to data presented at the 2021 IMRG Summit.

The choice of delivery option (or lack of) has a significant influence over purchasing decisions regardless of the technology used.

In Q2 2021, approximately 85% of orders on mobile devices in the U.K. were not completed, according to a [Statista](#) report. In addition, over the same three-month span, more than seven in ten carts created were left abandoned on computers.

And when it comes to price, customers want variety as well. At least if that variety doesn't stray too far from free, such as:



Same-day/Next day delivery



Weekend delivery



Pick-up lockers



Click-and-collect



Eco-friendly shipping

3

Sustainability

Globally 47% of consumers participating in [The 2019 IPC Cross-Border E-Commerce Shopper Survey](#) said they want parcel packaging to be recyclable, and 28 percent said they prefer carbon-neutral delivery. Interestingly, while speedy delivery is still important to most consumers, the survey found that 28 percent of respondents were willing to wait longer for their package to show up on the front porch if it meant it would reduce the environmental impact it made.

The stock returned to retailers is often landfilled, considered too time- and cost-intensive to add back into inventory. In fact, less than 50% of returned items ever make it back on the shelf—either physical or virtual. In the U.S., returned

items account for [5 billion pounds](#) of landfill waste. In 2019, it was estimated that transportation for returned items contributed an alarmingly high [15 million metric tons of carbon dioxide](#).

Even though most consumers would choose free shipping most of the time, customers may offset the cost of going green. According to a report by [Parcel and Post Technology International](#), as many as 46% of those surveyed would be willing to paying £1 (US\$1.38) or more on every parcel ordered. That's quite an overall commitment to greener delivery with 2.8 billion U.K. parcels shipped during the 2019/2020 fiscal year.



“ I care about the planet. I hate getting a package that’s full of paper or other filler because it’s too big for the thing I bought,” said an online shopper from London. “I may not shop from that site again if they send me something poorly packed.”

4

Free Shipping.



“ I won’t buy from a store if they are going to charge me for shipping,” says a U.S.-based shopper. “I’ll just keep Googling stores until I find one that has what I want and gives me free shipping.”

Free shipping isn’t free, but customers want it.

Micro Biz Mag polled 1,000 people in the U.K. in June 2021 and 45.6% of people said free delivery makes them more likely to buy from an online retailer. So obviously, free shipping is essential.

Of course, retailers understand that free shipping isn’t free to them. So, offsetting the expense of shipping to be able to offer low-cost and free shipping is essential to maintaining profit margins.

It takes a mix of creativity [minimum purchases for free shipping, flat rate shipping to encourage additional purchases, packing efficiently, flash sales that include shipping, and more]

and technology to help keep costs down and margins up.

According to the Supply Chain Technology Trends in the European Delivery Industry, obtaining better efficiencies and cutting costs is the primary rationale for trying new supply chain technologies (51%). By utilizing shipping software that can help find the best rates, time, and services, shippers can help meet customer expectations and save money at the same time.

Utilising the right technology can help shippers be more cost-efficient when incorporating some of the trending shipping tactics such as:



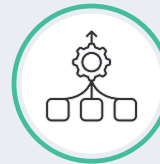
Packing efficiently



Omnichannel logistics



Multi-carrier networks



Streamlined cross-border consolidation



Fast, free, and sustainable shipping

5

Returns

Thanks to the lockdown, U.K. online sales rose by more than a third in 2020, the highest growth since 2007, according to online retail body IMRG. But as with anything, the increased sales come with a price tag and that price is returned items.

A Mintel study found that almost half (49%) of U.K. online shoppers sent something back in the past year. And that rate jumped to 60% for those aged 16-34.

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And an easy returns process is important to customers when making their shopping decisions, especially as more bracket purchases and they worry about items they have not physically seen.

According to Shopify, 58% of shoppers say they are "not satisfied" with the ease of making returns. Customers can quickly abandon a purchase or even a brand if they encounter an unclear or inadequate returns policy or a poor returns experience. However, beyond keeping them from not abandoning a basket, 72% of shoppers are willing to spend more per order or order more often from online stores with a convenient and customer-centric returns policy.

"I worry when I buy something online. I mean, you can't be sure if it is of the quality it seems in the pictures or if it is clothes, will they fit well," says a shopper from Sydney. "I need to be sure I can return it without it costing me more. And, I need to feel confident I'm going to be treated the way I would in an actual store."

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6 Special instructions

“ Please do not ring the doorbell as we have a newborn. Text when you deliver the order.”



“ I have a dog, but he’s friendly.”



“ Please leave the box on the back porch.”



Even when working from home, people want their parcels delivered how they want them. Therefore, e-commerce sites must have a place for customers to input special instructions. It is equally crucial that labels can be printed

with these instructions so drivers know what they need to do to deliver the best customer experience, as it is the retailer that will be held accountable.

“ My building is touchy about where packages are left if we are not home to receive the package,” a Canadian shopper describes. “I get very frustrated when I either can’t put that into my order or the store delivers it incorrectly.”



Conclusion

Shipping is evolving. It will continue to change to meet the demands of the customer. Be that free shipping, easy returns, or whatever the future may hold. Keeping up with customers' shipping demands is important. However, staying ahead of their desires is even more critical.

Having the best shipping technology can help you meet customers' needs while also meeting the needs of your business. Contact us today to learn how [SmartFreight can help deliver a great customer shipping experience.](#)



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