Product Returns & Inventory Flows

A sale does not always end the journey. Returns connect product movement, inventory information, and financial adjustments.

What is reverse logistics?

Reverse logistics covers products or materials moving back for assessment, recovery, recycling, or disposal. A shopper return, damaged delivery, or recall may trigger a different process. Follow the agreed company procedure for each situation.

1 Receive	2 Assess	3 Decide	4 Update	5 Close
Identify the item and reason	Check condition and authorization	Confirm the approved route	Record inventory and adjustments	Confirm action and ownership

Illustrative process: routes and responsibilities vary by product, return reason, and trading agreement.

Keep all three flows connected

PRODUCT	Where does it go? Separate and route the item as instructed. Return to sale only when authorized and suitable; otherwise follow the approved recovery, recycling, or disposal process.
INFORMATION	What needs to be recorded? Capture the item, quantity, reason, condition, location, and status. Stock on hand is not necessarily stock available to sell.
FINANCIAL	What needs to be reconciled? Confirm any refund, supplier credit, charge, or write-off under the applicable policy or agreement. Moving the item does not complete the financial process.

Before you close a return, ask:

Who owns the next step? Has the stock record been updated? Has the refund or credit been resolved? What could prevent the same issue happening again?

CONNECT IT TO YOUR WORK

Retail Fundamentals, within Understand the Retail Environment, explores how product, information, and financial flows affect everyday retail decisions.