

35-second returns? Walmart speeds up online purchase returns

October 9 2017



In an Aug. 26, 2016, file photo, people walk in and out of a Walmart store, in Dallas. Walmart announced new moves Monday, Oct. 9, 2017, to speed up the return process for online purchases, including letting some shoppers keep the stuff they don't want and still get a refund. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez, File)

Online sales have divided retailers into two camps: the quick and the dead.

To that end, Walmart is altering its policies to speed returns, even it means that nothing is returned at all in some cases.

Starting next month through Walmart's app, customers will be able to scan goods they no longer want with their own smartphone and drop it off at a customer service desk.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said Monday, will take 35 seconds or less. Returns right now are about quadruple that time, not including any wait in line.

Retailers believe that the costs of accommodating customers with easy returns will be offset by increased volume. Amazon.com Inc. recently partnered with Kohl's so that customers in Los Angeles and Chicago can drop off goods bought through Amazon at Kohl's stores, where employees, pack and ship those items back at no cost.

Making it easy for customers is so important to the Bentonville, Arkansas, retailer that in December, some items no longer wanted will not even have to be returned.

That includes goods that Walmart would discard anyway, like opened makeup, bruised perishable goods, or perhaps a bottle of floor cleaner damaged during delivery.

Through Walmart's app, you will be able to scan the item with a smartphone for an instant refund. New technology can detect those who are trying to game the system, Walmart said.

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Citation: 35-second returns? Walmart speeds up online purchase returns (2017, October 9) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-10-second-walmart-online.html>

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