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PIM Merchant Guide

Improving return rates for apparel companies

Online fashion buyers struggling to find the right fit

The growth of online channels is resulting in more lenient return practices. Consumers view shopping more as a risk-free discovery of size and style rather than a final purchase. This results in high costs and risks for retailers.

A very complex situation exists in the e-commerce industry, especially in companies that sell apparel. According to Shopify Fashion Industry Report, the percentage of returns in this industry's online channels is between 30-50%.

McKinsey Returns Management Survey shows, that the issue of returns is heavily neglected by retailers and is not in the top five priorities for nearly 33% of them. Many see returns as a necessity and focus on improving return policies rather than analyzing the causes of returns.
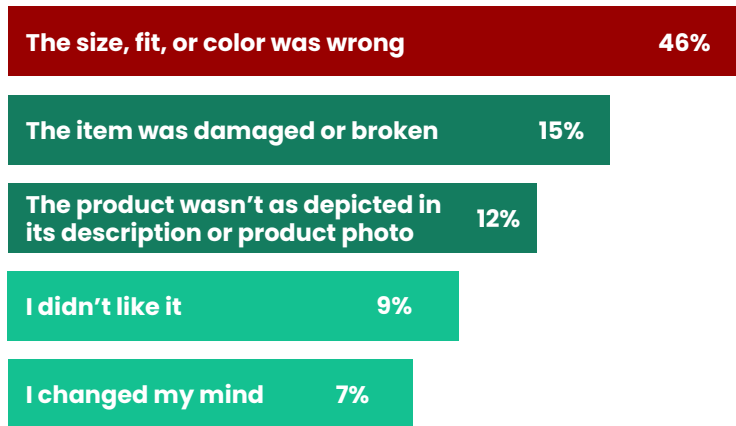
As the main reason for returns customers indicate problems with proper description of products, especially in terms of size, fit or color. These factors are indicated by almost half of the people who decide to return the purchased products.

Clothing and accessories are items chosen on subjective grounds, such as preference and emotion and the selection of clothing (especially in e-commerce) is huge.

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#1 reasons for returning: These are mostly due to product content or other product issues.

% returns to retailers

The size, fit, or color was wrong	46%
The item was damaged or broken	15%
The product wasn't as depicted in its description or product photo	12%
I didn't like it	9%
I changed my mind	7%

Source:https://see.narvar.com/2019-09-GLO -WebContent-Consumer-Report-Returns_2 019-Report-The-State-of-Online-Returns-EN ---PDF-LP.html

Customers want to try it on before deciding if it suits them. In a physical store, this is easy to do, customers can see, touch and try on the product before buying.

What is important, almost 62% of the returns of purchases made over the Internet are related to the desire to exchange the product for another one, and not to return it completely. The conclusions are obvious - the problem is the product content.

However, it is primarily about the information that specifies the parameters and physical characteristics of products, rather than general marketing descriptions or photos.

The key to lowering the return rate is therefore proper parameterization of product content.

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How to reduce fashion returns?

In theory, it seems very simple - just describe the products accurately. In practice, you need to think about both the Customer Experience perspective and the whole process of working on product content parameterization (Product Information Management perspective).

Improve your customers experience expectations

Fashion retailers can take few steps to improve their customers' experiences and reduce returns:

- Give customers detailed product information, including a description of the fabric and garment measurements

- Create size guides that span multiple measurement points

- Publish instructions on how to take correct measurements

- Offer customers a diverse selection of fit models for each item

- Display multiple high quality images that show clothing from different angles

- Promote customers to leave honest feedback about the fit and quality of the ordered items

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Best practices

Display multiple high quality images

Photos should clearly show the best features of the products. It is a good practice to employ models of different sizes to better reflect the real nature of the garment.

Give customers detailed product information

Instead of elaborate marketing descriptions, focus on presenting the physical features of the product that will allow customers to quickly assess the fit according to their needs.
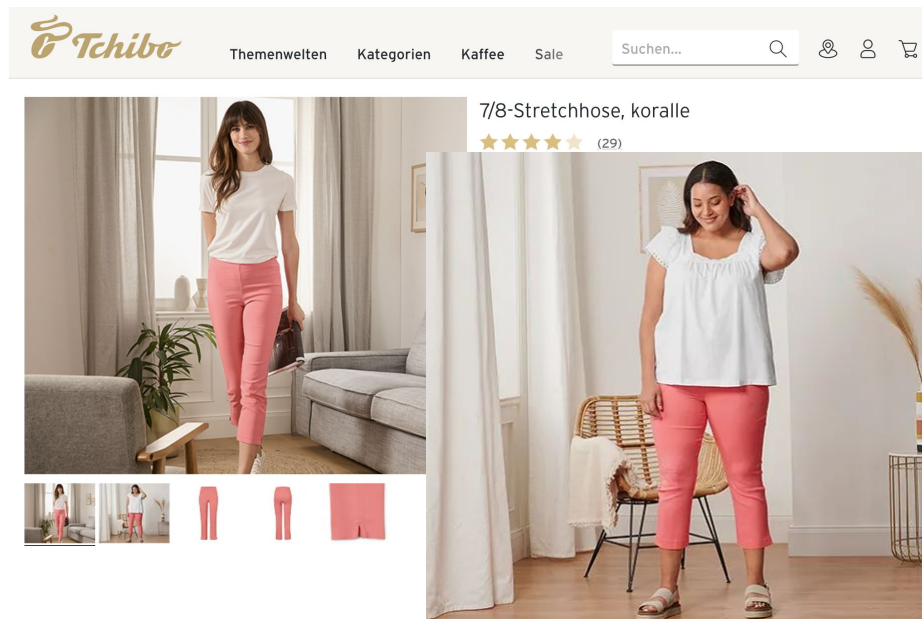
Flagship e-store Tchibo Gmbh presents products on models in different sizes. This gives users a real wearing context.

Source: www.tchibo.de

How to reduce fashion returns?

DILLING

Women   Men   Children   Baby   Merino wool   New   Sale   About us

Home / Women
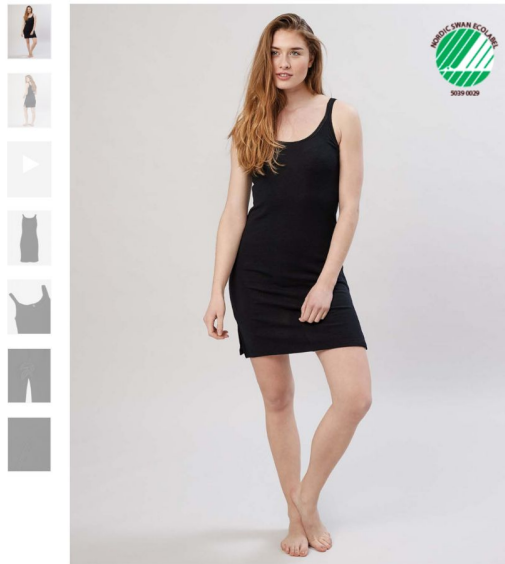
Merino wool strappy dress- Black

100% organic merino wool...

#7536-165-999

Black

Select size

| 8 | 10 | 12 |

Buy 3 of the same product...

–   1 pcs   +

Product details —

This beautiful wool dress is made of the highest quality organic merino wool. The itchy hairs of the wool fibers hav been removed by a gentle 16-hour treatment process, making the dress feel wonderfully soft against your skin. Alongside the merino wool's ability to regulate body temperature, this dress is perfect for a good night's sleep. This woollen dress is equipped with elastic straps, making it suitable for breastfeeding.

Material weight: 215 gr/m2

Material: 100% organic merino wool, itch-free, from non-mulesed sheep

Layers: Base layer

Our model is 5'9" / 180 cm and is wearing size 38

Shipping   Features   Washing guide   Size and fit

Product details   +

Quality description   +

Supply chain   +

Quality description —

1x1 smooth

Our signature wool quality. 1x1 products have a smooth and ev... fabric, you will see that it has a tiny rib structure.

All our 1x1 products have received a unique 16-hour environme... leaves you with an incredibly soft and itch free product. This k... stretchability and a comfortably light feel with plenty of freed... 1x1 products will stretch when worn, but the wool fibres will co... raw (untreated) which means that the naturally insulating and ... are kept intact.

100% organic merino wool from Argentina

Eco-friendly enzyme treatment

Medium stretch

Nordic ...

Smooth ...

21.5 mic... Nm 40/...

*Not including our mélange and striped products. These are yarn ... these are produced without the use of heavy metals.

**Because of our unique enzyme treatment, our 21.5 micron has th...

INDIVIDUAL MEASUREMENT CHART FOR THIS PRODUCT

Size	Length (shoulder to bottom) (CM)
8	86
10	91
12	93
14	97
16	99
18	102

Measurement chart
① Length (shoulder to bottom)
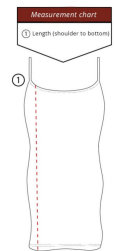
We do not measure the circumference of the product as the material is very stretchy and will adapt to the shape of the body. Therefore, measurements taken on products placed on a flat surface can be misleading. Instead, we base our sizes on the body measurements above.

Danish brand Dilling describes products in an expanded way.

It provides detailed information about the product, its quality, size and fit, and even how to care for it.

Source: www.dilling.com

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Create size guides that span multiple measurement points

Don't just present a simple sizing chart, make it a real size guide for your customers. Visualize what specific parameters mean and don't show an overabundance of information at once.

Publish instructions on how to take correct measurements

Support customers in collecting the right measurements. Build a configurator with dimensions that interactively supports the customer throughout the entire process of collecting dimensions.

British brand Alexandra gives customers great guide tool for measuring.

Source: www.alexandra.co.uk

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Bad examples

Size chart as an image

Don't upload size charts as an image. This is a common practice among many retailers, but it leads to multiple problems with SEO that negatively impact information available to customers and prevent good user experience on mobile devices.

Size chart only for one model

Retailers often thoroughly describe only one size of a product. The one used in the model's photo session. Usually it is size S, and looks and fits perfect on the model. Don't do that. Customers want to see the real context of their sizes and more complex size charts.

General/universal size guides

Posting generic size charts for your entire product range is a really bad idea, especially if you run a multi-brand store. There are many differences between the sizes of Lacoste and Adidas brand products, for example.

How a PIM can help to improve quality of sizes parametrization

A PIM system will allow you to increase the quality and detail of your product data, but not only that, it will streamline the entire process of managing product parameters.

In Ergonode PIM, the first step to better product parametrization is a good match between product types and data.

In the apparel industry, there is usually a base product as a master model (at Ergonode it is called a product with variants) that has relationships to other simple products (variants) that have specific sizes.

Significantly, it is these variant products that are the virtual equivalent of the indexes present in the warehouse or on the in-store shelf.

Consequently, different product information will be related to models (more marketing or branding content such as photos, material descriptions, how to take care of the product, etc.), and completely different for variants related to size descriptions.

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S

M

L

Size as binding
attribute

Size
Variants

Type: Simple products

- product data focuses on size
  guides and charts

Master Product
Model

Type: Product with variants

- product data focuses on
  marketing and branding

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Build dedicated product templates with size charts

Ergonode PIM helps you create the right parameterization with a great drag&drop template design engine.

Variations can have a different set of attributes, designed to best enhance the measurement data.

Your team will gain a smart and effective way of individual product size management.

This will increase the quality of the data, but also the enrichment usability.

Organize your content enrichment process

Parameterizing data is one side of the coin, organizing your product content team is equally important. In Ergonode PIM you will build a smart editing process tailored to your organization.

Define any product status, build rules governing the work of your team. Organize work in a visual way using a Kanban board. It's both easy and effective.
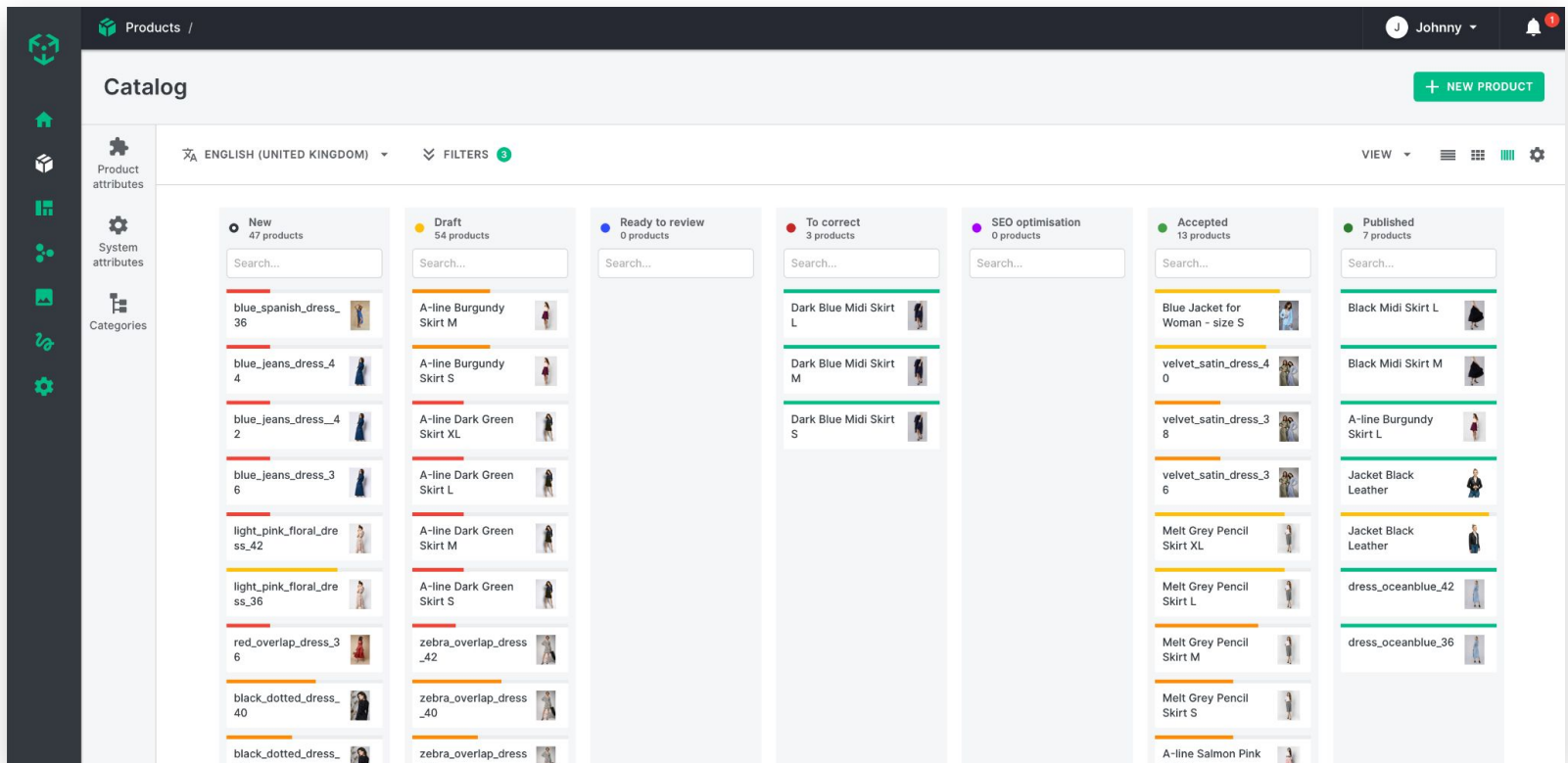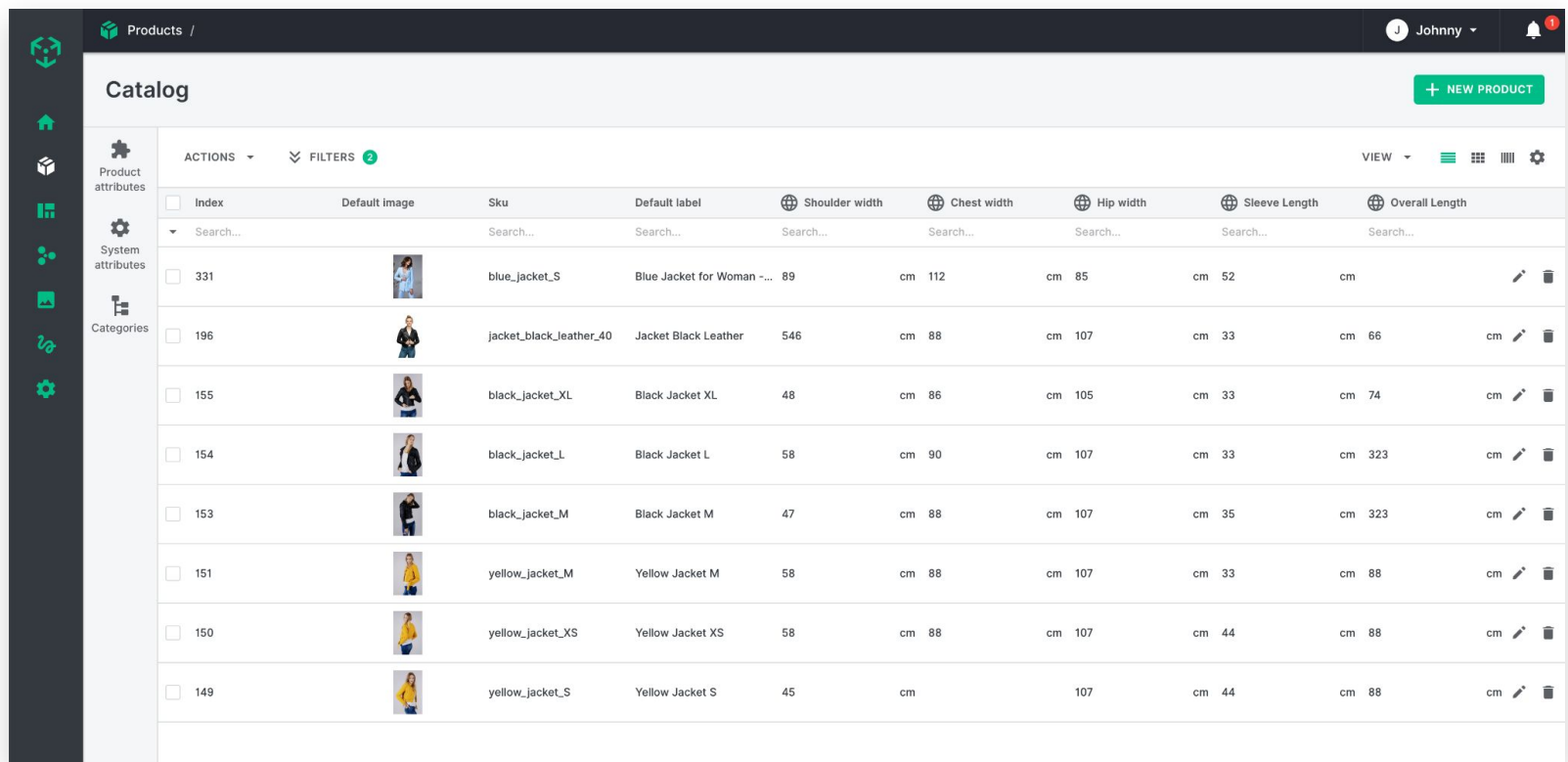
Personalize your view to improve size management

Ergonode PIM allows you to easily manage your sizing metrics in much the same way as in a familiar spreadsheet. Just drag and drop the relevant attributes as grid columns and you can edit the data

inline directly instead of switching to the product card.

The intuitiveness and high usability of this solution will certainly improve the quality of work with size tables.
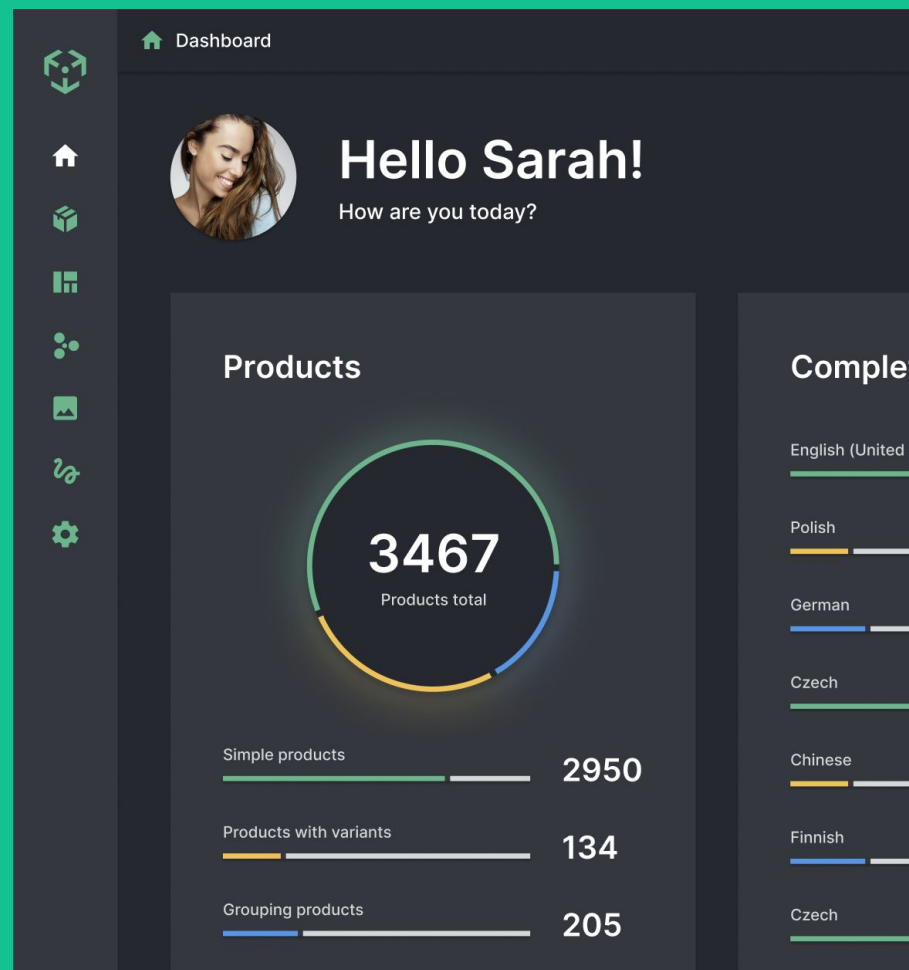
Are you ready to let Ergonode accelerate your fashion business?

Ergonode is a modern, open PIM system that facilitates and streamlines product information management in e-commerce. It is a simple and ergonomic platform to create, manage and distribute product information to multiple channels.

Based on years of experience in the e-commerce industry, we have created a PIM system, which is the answer to the needs of the world of digital transformation. Our mission is to make management of thousands of products as simple and convenient as possible.

We are focusing on design, efficiency & ergonomy for even better user experience.

Dashboard

Hello Sarah!
How are you today?

Products

3467
Products total

Simple products
2950

Products with variants
134

Grouping products
205

Comple

English (United

Polish

German

Czech

Chinese

Finnish

Czech

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Curious about our product? Book a demo call on our website and let's get in touch.

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www.ergonode.com