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Press Release

New GLS service for online stores already in operation

The courier company launched a modern portal for parcel returns. The service works in domestic and cross-border trade. For online stores access to GLS service is free of charge. Return policy is crucial for online trade, much more so than for traditional stores. And certainly in times of "loyalty shock".

Only 3 out of 10 online shoppers have never returned an ordered product. This is according to the report "E-commerce in Poland 2020", prepared by Gemius. A similar picture emerges from a study conducted by Splitit in the US (in November 2019). It shows that nearly 60% of online shoppers have returned a product already ordered online at least once, and 38% have returned up to 10% of orders.

This shows that being able to return easily is crucial for e-commerce. The Gemius report shows that this primarily concerns stores selling clothing, footwear and related accessories - their customers make returns or exchanges relatively often. But for other branches it is also very important.

- By launching a portal for parcel returns, we support the e-commerce industry. Online stores often build a competitive advantage through good customer service. We focus on functionality and efficiency of the whole process - says Małgorzata Markowska, marketing manager at GLS Poland.

Return policy and loyalty

Online stores operating in the U.S. have experienced a "loyalty shock" in the pandemic period, as the authors of the report "State of Returns: New Expectations" (Narvar Consumer Report, 2020) - as many as 56% of shoppers shopped at new stores. Why? It was because of shorter delivery times, the fact that a certain product was out of stock, they needed something they didn't usually buy, they were supporting a local business, or they just wanted to try something new. What's more, 87% of the people in this group said they would continue to shop at the new retailers once things return to normal.

Another very interesting topic: 76% of customers who had used a store's offer the first time and could "easily" or "very easily" return the product said they would shop in that store again. 33% of those who experienced difficulty returning an item to a retailer said they would not return to that shop.

These numbers confirm what is known intuitively: returning a product requires commitment from customers, and the less time and energy the process requires, the more likely they are to decide to buy again. And a first experience of this kind has a huge impact on how a store is rated.

Without easy returns, they often give up

Many other reports of this kind confirm: most shoppers pay attention to the return policy regardless of whether they later use this possibility. A report by Polish company Merce from 2020 shows that most often - in the case of 44% of the surveyed online stores - customers return only up to 3% of all orders, and in 17% of the stores returns concern 3-5% of all orders. Though many smaller stores admit that they do not keep such statistics, but it can be considered a fairly reliable approximation of what the real level of returns is.

However the mentioned Splitit report shows a trend which is probably much more important from the sellers point of view: as much as 52% of customers resigned from completing the purchase because of the fear that the return process would be troublesome. Importantly, 67% of young shoppers aged 25-34 had this attitude. We're talking about a group of potential customers who haven't even reached the stage of returning an ordered product, and perhaps would never have such a need. However, due to the fact that they were not convinced by the return method, they simply gave up while placing the order online.

In Poland and abroad

How does the return process work with the new GLS service? If the store makes the service of the courier company available to its customers, the return label in pdf format is generated on the website and sent by e-mail to the recipient. It can also be printed directly from the website. Parcels can be returned through the Szybka Paczka/Parcel Shop points both in Poland and throughout Europe.

The new GLS service enables the return of parcels from a total of 15 European countries, including Germany, Austria, Holland, Spain and the Netherlands. This is important as, according to the mentioned report, already 30% of Polish Internet users shop in online stores operating abroad and Polish online stores successfully operate in foreign markets.

- *We are experiencing a steady increase in the volume of cross-border shipments. The possibility to make convenient returns is definitely an advantage from the point of view of customers from abroad. It is an element which builds credibility and trust in the store,"* adds Małgorzata Markowska.

A service for every store

How can online stores get access to a service that facilitates parcel returns?

- Customer just contacts our customer service department who will guide through the whole process. The solution is completely free of charge and browser-based, so it does not require any additional investments from online shops either," explains Małgorzata Markowska.

Both large and small stores can use the service. The volume of shipments is of no importance here. The new solution will also benefit various types of rental shops, including wedding dresses, costumes or event equipment.