

CASE STUDY

MATALAN

REAL LIFE READY

# Driving efficiencies and boosting sales with retail returns at Matalan



**advanced**  
intelligent supply chain  
a Reconomy Group company

**MATALAN**  
REAL LIFE READY

## Customer overview

Matalan was founded over 30 years ago and their mission has always stayed the same; to provide outstanding quality and value for modern families. Now a leading UK and International omni-channel retailer ranging from womenswear and menswear to homeware and furniture. Matalan has an impressive 230 UK stores and 30 International franchise stores within Europe and the Middle East. This out-of-town retailer has embraced the changing face of retail and is driving rapid ecommerce growth.

## The backdrop

Matalan has experienced strong sales despite the clothing retailer admitting it was “feeling the impact” of the ongoing supply chain issues, along with the rest of the retail sector. Given the huge levels of ecommerce growth the business has delivered in recent years, this has also led to a natural increase in the number of online returns.

## The challenge

During peak periods, it has historically been challenging for Matalan to keep up with returns volumes, and ensure stock is available for sale again as quickly as possible.



## The solution

Matalan has partnered with returns specialist, ASCG. Following months of planning and rigorous testing Matalan's new process for customer returns has recently gone live. In just two weeks, nearly 12,000 items have been processed. Matalan Head of Logistics, Paul Kee, said the project has had a great start.

ASCG carries out inspection checks to assess whether it meets all requisite quality standards and stock will be graded and sorted six ways at the returns desk.

Processed returns will then be sent to stores or if an ecommerce only line returned to the DC ready to go back into the pick face.

This in turn benefits Matalan's technologist teams and the business gains much needed operational space in the distribution centre.

## The outcomes

- **New outsourced returns system processes nearly 12,000 units in just two weeks 11 March 2022.**
- **The increased capability with ASCG means that items will be processed quickly all year-round allowing Matalan customers to be credited as soon as possible, something which customer service feedback has highlighted as a priority.**
- **ASCG's specialist equipment, including steam tunnels, help with product care as well as enhanced systems which provide greater insight to returns data.**
- **In partnership with ASCG, Matalan is currently mapping out further returns enhancements.**



**12,000 items have been processed**



**Inspection checks requisite quality standards**



**Sorted six ways at the returns desk**



**Gain operational space**



**12,000 units in just two weeks**



**Items processed quickly**



**Help with product care**



**Mapping returns enhancements**

## The feedback

### Paul Kee - Head of logistics at Matalan

*"Given the huge levels of ecommerce growth which we have delivered over many years, we've obviously seen an increase in the number of online returns," Paul Kee said. "During peak periods it has sometimes been challenging for us to keep up with the returns volumes. However, our partnership with returns specialists ASCG, gives us a great deal more flexibility. Ecommerce returns, which customers return via post or arrange collection by Hermes, are now sent straight to the Advanced warehouse in Halifax."*

*Paul added: "For the last eight months or so, the project team looked at the returns process and ultimately worked out a solution which works better for our customers and the business. It was no small task, but they have done just that. I would like to thank Rebecca the cross functional project team incorporating systems, operations, QC/returns, business change, procurement and finance for designing and implementing a solution which will have real benefits for the whole business."*



## Further information

Caroline Ellis

**e:** caroline.ellis@asc.group

**t:** +44 (0)1274 470507

### Advanced Supply Chain Group

606 Building, Wharfedale Road,  
Euroway Trading Estate,  
Bradford, BD4 6SG, United Kingdom.



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