

## “eCommerce Growth and Customer Demand Drive Need for Returns Solutions”

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By Kathy Siviter

### Reasons for returns



Source: The Colography Group, Inc.

March 8, 2017 (Arlington, Va.) – As eCommerce continues to grow and customers demand not only simple, but cheap/free returns solutions, retailers and shippers are exploring new processes and reverse logistics solutions to facilitate customer returns. At PostalVision 2020/7.0 on March 21-22, 2017, an expert panel will share industry trends, insights and innovative solutions for returns/reverse logistics.

According to recent research, at least 30% of all products ordered online are returned, and about 49% of retailers now offer free return shipping. From the consumer end of the equation, research shows that 92% of consumers will buy something again if returns are easy and 79% of consumers want free shipping on returns, and 67% of consumers check the returns policy before making a purchase. With these types of numbers, it is no surprise that retailers and shippers are focusing on development of seamless, user-friendly and cost-effective returns solutions.

Businesses constantly struggle to control their costs. Dealing with product returns puts increased pressure on cost control as returns can result in lost revenue (product returned for refund), unhappy customers (loss of future revenue) and/or add increased costs needed to satisfy customer's expectations (redelivery of product already purchased). Businesses are exploring different strategies when dealing with returns to help keep their costs in check. At its March 2017 event, PostalVision will take a deeper dive into the topic of returns and new business models emerging in our ecosystem.

The returns focus panel will be moderated by Dr. Ian Stanford, USPS Office of Inspector General, who has led the USPS OIG's research efforts around the "Evolving Logistics Landscape and the U.S. Postal Service," which explores developments, trends, and challenges in the returns end of the logistics business. Darren Lamb, The Colography Group, will share the latest industry trends on returns/reverse logistics within the global postal ecosystem. Tony Sciarrotta, Executive Director of The Reverse Logistics Association, will discuss challenges and solutions being explored in the reverse logistics provider ecosystem as well as the needs of retailers. Larisa Summers, EVP of eCommerce & Digital Marketing for Optoro will bring the experience of an end-to-end reverse logistics solutions provider. David Lione, OpenMarket, will talk about how SMS/MMS text messaging is helping drive customer-centric logistics solutions.

**Dr. Ian Stanford** is a Public Policy Analyst at the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General's Risk Analysis Research Center. His research focuses on how technological innovations and public policy can modernize and improve postal operations, particularly in the parcels market. Recently, he was part of a research team that wrote a white paper looking at how the Postal Service is adapting to ongoing trends in the Logistics Industry entitled The Evolving Logistics Landscape and the U.S. Postal Service. He currently leads a research team examining the role of the U.S. Postal Service plays in the reverse logistics industry.

**Darren Lamb** serves as The Colography Group's Director of Research & Business Development, assisting clients with a wide range of strategic and tactical issues including product development, critical buying factor segmentation, network operation decision-making, market opportunities and pricing strategies. With a strong knowledge of both the expedited package market and data-driven strategic planning, Darren has been responsible for developing numerous customized quantitative research projects providing clients with a comprehensive understanding of the diverse market dynamics of the shipping industry, for both domestic and international trade. His customized research analysis is effectively used to forecast market developments, identify market opportunities and maximize revenue growth.

**Tony Sciarrotta** is Executive Director of The Reverse Logistics Association, and has held a variety of sales, marketing, and service positions in the consumer electronics industry for over 30 years, including Philips from 1988 through 2013. Beginning in 1998, Tony began a returns management department and focused Philips on activities to reduce returns and their costs. Tony has worked with retailers and internal business groups to implement returns initiatives that became best-in-class industry practices. Since Philips, Tony has continued to consult and evangelize for improvements to consumer products to reduce returns, and to improve reverse logistics activities through his new role as Executive Director for the Reverse Logistics Association.

**Larisa Summers** is Executive Vice President of E-Commerce and Digital Marketing for Optoro. She has worked with both venture-funded startups as well as Fortune 500 companies. Larisa began her e-Commerce career in 1999 with industry pioneer Buy.com, where she launched their first advertising sales capability. During her 7-year stint at the company, she oversaw all of their online and offline marketing programs as their Vice President of Marketing. Larisa then moved to Silicon Valley, where she served as Vice President of Marketing for shopping search engine TheFind.com (acquired by Facebook in 2015). Larisa got her first taste of the reverse logistics world when she joined Best Buy and led both their direct-to-consumer and wholesale Secondary Markets online businesses.

**David Lione** is a Senior Enterprise Account Director at OpenMarket, selling global messaging services to large enterprises in the financial services and logistics industries, including the postal delivery segment. David has over 20 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, specializing in wireless, data center, and IP networks. OpenMarket, a division of Amdocs, helps enterprises use mobile/SMS to transform their business, providing mobile engagement solutions for organizations to optimize their business and enhance relationships with their customers and employees.