Philippe's Retail News: Returns Season Starts in December

November 2026 · Philippe Jeanneau

Holiday sales end in December.

Holiday returns start right after.

From my desk today

I was meeting with a potential client recently, and the conversation turned to a question every good buyer asks:

"How do you manage credits? And what do you cover?"

It's a smart question. Especially right now.

Because the way a supplier handles returns tells you a lot about how easy, or how painful, January is going to be.

The retailer reality

Returns are a bigger part of retail than most people think.

In the U.S., the National Retail Federation and Happy Returns estimated that shoppers would return 15.8% of everything they bought in 2025. For holiday purchases, it was 17%. Online, 19.3%.

Source: NRF and Happy Returns, 2025 Retail Returns Landscape (October 2025).

Not every return is your supplier's business. A gift that didn't fit someone's taste is between you and your customer.

But some returns land squarely between you and your supplier: the product that arrived damaged, the defective unit, the item ordered by mistake.

Those are the ones where a clear process, or the lack of one, decides whether you get your money back quickly or chase it for weeks.

Behind the scenes at Randmar

Here's what I told that potential client: five things to set up before the holiday returns arrive.

1. Know who covers what.

Defective products sold to end users are covered by the manufacturers, under their own warranty policies.

At Randmar, our role is clear. Within 15 days of reception at your store or warehouse, we credit:

- **Damaged or defective on arrival:** reported to us, then credited.
- **Ordered by mistake:** returned to our inventory, then credited.

When you know which bucket a return falls into, you know exactly who to call.

2. Check every delivery when it arrives.

That 15-day window goes fast in December. Open the boxes, check the products, and flag anything damaged or ordered by mistake right away, not in January.

3. Start every return from the order page.

On your Randmar account, the process is simple:

1. Open the order and start the RMA from the order page.
2. The RMA is approved if it's within our terms and conditions.
3. You return the items for inspection.
4. If the return qualifies, the credit lands on your Randmar account.

No emails back and forth. No guessing where your credit is.

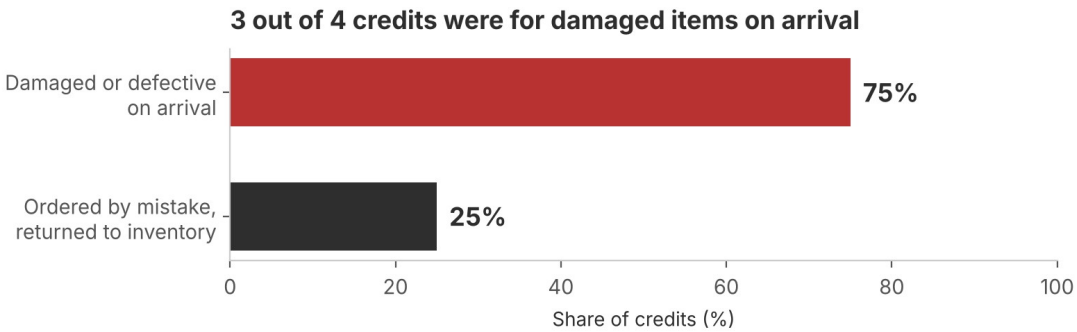
4. Know what "normal" looks like.

I pulled 90 days of sales and credits for one of our main resellers, a client who knows our system well.

Credits stayed under 2% of sales

1.8%
of sales value was credited

~2 in 100
orders needed a credit



Source: Randmar, one of our main resellers, August 4 to November 4, 2026.

What it means for you: when the process is clear and used well, credits stay small and predictable. Three out of four are simple damaged-on-arrival cases. The rest are ordering mistakes, which you can reduce with a quick check before you submit an order.

A word on that 25%. We're happy to offer credits and returns for items ordered by mistake. But that convenience can come at a cost: restocking fees and shipping charges can apply to these returns.

This safety net saves you from paying the full price of a wrong order. Use it too often, though, and it quietly erodes your margin. It's there to help, not to replace good ordering habits and operational accuracy.

5. Let your AI agent handle the paperwork.

The RMA process is already simple in your Randmar account. Connect your AI agent to it, and it becomes even more fluid.

Right in your agent, you can simply say: "Issue an RMA for this product on this order." The agent runs the show, while you manage your actual business.

To connect your agent to your Randmar account:

- **Claude:** randmar.io/claude-code
- **ChatGPT (Codex):** randmar.io/codex

My real point

You can't avoid returns.

But with a clear process, they stay small, predictable and fast to settle.

Your quick win this week

Write down, for each of your top suppliers, three things: who covers defective products, how many days you have to report damage, and how you start a return. If you can't answer one of them, ask before December.

Your turn

What's the most frustrating part of handling returns with your suppliers?

Randmar. Helping Canadian retailers sell more, every day.

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