

COMMERCE

Barneys prompts off-price ecommerce with added return feature

April 29, 2016



Image courtesy of Barneys

By STAFF REPORTS

Department store chain Barneys New York's discount outlet Barneys Warehouse is making online purchasing less daunting with the addition of returns.

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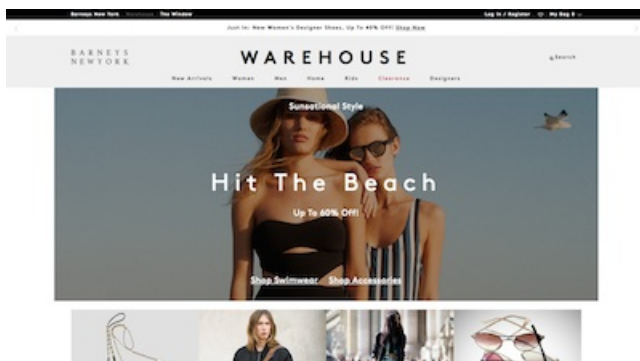
Without the opportunity to return, some consumers may have previously been wary of buying apparel through the ecommerce site, since sizing can vary from brand to brand. In recent years, luxury retailers have been expanding their off-price outlets online and in bricks-and-mortar, enabling an access point for aspirational consumers.

Ecommerce confidence

The Barneys Warehouse site is still fairly new, having launched in 2013 ([see story](#)).

While Barneys has opened up returns for its sale site, the process is channel-specific. As with the main line, online purchases need to be returned via mail.

In the United States, consumers can return men's and women's clothing items within 30 days for a refund. A \$9.95 return fee will be taken out for processing.



Screenshot of Barneys Warehouse site

Barneys Warehouse stores are situated in metropolitan areas, leaving many areas of the United States unserved by bricks-and-mortar. This addition of return eligibility may encourage those who do not have a store nearby to shop with the brand online.

This move comes after Barneys introduced free returns to its ecommerce services to make online shopping less stressful for its consumers.

Prior to this the retailer had free standard shipping but charged an \$8 shipping fee for online returns sent through the mail. Taking away this possible fee allows consumers to shop more freely online, knowing that they can easily return anything they are not satisfied with ([see story](#)).

Department stores have been aggressively expanding their outlet retail footprints to capture discount sales from aspirational consumers, but are these off-price stores doing more harm than good?

Discount stores enable a retailer to reach more consumers at varying price points, but a growth strategy that favors off-price bricks-and-mortar may in time hurt the full-line store's luxury image. This requires a delicate balancing act for retailers to retain their branding, positioning and pricing strategy ([see story](#)).

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