30+ WAYS TO BOOST E-COMMERCE HOLIDAY SALES IN 2022

A step-by-step checklist filled with result-driven strategies to help e-commerce retailers make the most out of the 2022 holiday season
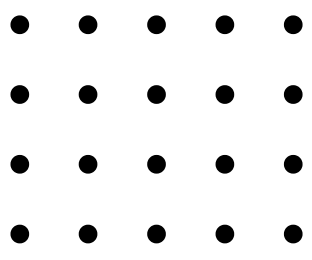
TABLE OF CONTENTS

The holiday season is nearing. A time of goodwill recognition between friends, families, and most importantly, retailers and customers. Give your customers the best experience across their journey and get increased customer loyalty and spending in return.

Why particularly emphasize this during the holiday season, you ask? This is because the holidays are your chance to make more sales than the rest of the year combined.

In 2022, US holiday retail sales are expected to reach $1.3 trillion, a 3.3% increase over 2021. Holiday e-commerce sales are expected to grow 15.5% to $236 billion!

However, as for the e-commerce retail community, the holiday season is a time of stressful delight, given that planning for a time like this is never easy. Being aware of the relevant trends and predictions can help to stay ahead of potential issues that you might face while trying to maximize sales.

Holiday season by the numbers and buyer sentiment

- The global annual inflation rate is predicted to be **around 6%** by Christmas.
- **Nearly 9 in 10 (89%)** of consumers expect inflation to have an impact on their holiday spending, with **59% expecting** that the impact will be moderate or significant.
- Majority of the customers plan to spend between **$25-50** on their purchases.
- **59% of the customers** plan to spend more than $200 for Christmas, followed by **22% planning to spend $100-150** on Thanksgiving purchases.

Staying ahead of potential challenges is just half the battle. Remember, as you're looking forward to increasing sales, keep an eye out for working strategies in place that can enable you to get to the sales number you're expecting.

In order to help you get started, here's a checklist with 30+ ways to help you boost your sales and ultimately have a successful 2022 holiday season. Get to know what they are and try implementing them ASAP.

Your 34-point checklist to boost e-commerce holiday sales

Before we get started, here's a small gist of what you'll be seeing in this checklist.

To make it easier for you, we've categorized this checklist based on different business aspects and teams of your e-commerce business.

1. **Promotional Campaigns**
2. **Website**
3. **Inventory and Fulfillment**
4. **Sales**
5. **Customer Service**
6. **Shipping and Delivery**
7. **Returns**
8. **Bonus**

As you're implementing the strategies mentioned under each area, you can mark one by one as done.

Ready to get started? We'll begin with your promotional campaigns for the holiday season.

Promotions will be playing a huge role in this Holiday season. Therefore, it is crucial to come up with a creative promotional strategy to stand out from the competition.

Try implementing the following ideas in your promotional strategy to prepare your business for the holiday season frenzy.

✅ 1) **Take last year's campaign(s) into consideration** – The easiest way to get started with your marketing plans for the upcoming holiday season is to take references from last year. **Revisiting historical campaign performances gives you an understanding of what worked (and what didn't)**. This saves both your time and effort spent on research and allows you to draft your campaigns early.

✅ 2) **Interactive Social Media Content** - **Keep your brand's Social Media profiles engaging** by regularly interacting with your audience. Also, extend the capabilities of your social promotions by:

- Knowing their likes and preferences from regular interactions and targeting them in a more personalized way.
- Sharing positive feedback from existing customers to promote your brand
- Showing gratitude to encourage them to keep shopping with you.

☑ **3) Add a personal touch to your Email campaigns** – Sort your lead list and **send personalized campaigns to your customers** with the added touch of an offer tied to holidays. With the help of today's technology, you can <u>automate these email notifications</u>, once the target user crosses a funnel stage. Personalized emails can also be sent to customers who stopped shopping with you and users who abandoned their carts.

☑ **4) Create holiday-themed landing pages** – Visually appealing holiday-themed landing pages for special offers and new product launches help you**:**
- Stay relevant and attract potential customers.
- Increase your e-commerce site's conversion rates.
- **Extend the holiday theme to your website, primarily the home page and product pages** to let your customers know that you are as prepared and excited for the holidays as they are.
- Include elements such as a countdown timer or a limited-period discount spin-wheel on your landing pages to increase a sense of urgency or "FOMO" (Fear Of Missing Out).

☑ **5) Tie-up with Influencers** – Partnering with influencers is not expensive anymore! Instead of macro influencers, who charge a hefty sum, you can have a tie-up with <u>micro-influencers</u> with a lower but more engaged fan base. Such **influencers with a niche can be beneficial for your business via higher conversion rates**.

☑ **6) Send out offers and promotions that your customers can't refuse - Catch your customers' attention by providing them with great deals across funnel stages.**

- Run limited-time offers such as "Flat 25% on combos", "Buy 1 Get 1", etc to bring in new customers by catching their attention.
- Begin a customer loyalty program, share personal recommendations, etc, to encourage repeat shoppers.
- Make use of non-product marketing techniques such as "Free shipping and returns", "Cash-on-Delivery", "BOPIS (Buy-online-pick-up-Instore)", etc to prevent cart abandonment.

Remember, while you're trying to bring in more customers, also keep your existing customers in mind, as they tend to spend more with you than new ones.

☑ **7) Get the most out of paid marketing campaigns** - Paid marketing or PPC (Pay-Per-Click) marketing is one the easiest ways to grow awareness of your brand as it eliminates the process of skimming through your long lead lists. **Make effective use of <u>Zero-party data</u>** (directly from the user), a goldmine for your business as it gives you the ICPs (Ideal Customer Profiles). <u>Combine this data with Machine Learning to send Performance Max campaigns</u> and enhance conversions. You can also use this data to send personalized campaigns and retarget prospects, who are sitting on the fence.

50%
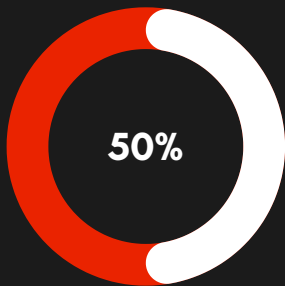
50% of users clicked through
to a brand's website after
viewing their Instagram Stories

92%
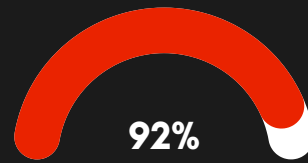
92% of users say that they've
acted at the moment after seeing
a product on Social Media

61%

61% of consumers trust
influencer recommendations

4-in-10 consumers are biased
towards branded content

Source: Hootsuite and Shopify

Hubspot's research shows that website optimization can improve conversions by 70%. Here's how you can improve the outlook and usability of your website and motivate shoppers to get converted as customers.

✅ **8) Include User-Generated Content in your content strategy - UGC serves as social proof for your business** and comes at absolutely zero costs. Promoting user-generated content as a part of your branded content:

- Helps you share honest testimonies that make your brand trustworthy.
- Makes your customers feel valued as their opinion is now recognized and appreciated.

✅ **9) Optimize SEO via relevant holiday keywords - Fill your content with relevant holiday-aligned keywords** and increase your e-commerce site's traffic. Identify the relevant target and semantic keywords on research platforms such as Semrush and Google Analytics. However, keep in mind to not dump too many keywords and make sure to weed out negative keywords that affect your bounce rate.

✅ **10) Improve your website's loading speed** - Increased traffic during times like the holidays can affect your website's loading speed and make it slow. While it may look trivial, **slow sites indeed demotivate your potential shoppers**. To avoid that scenario, you can improve page speed by getting insights into your pages' performance and making relevant changes such as compressing images and evaluating plugins.

☑ **11) Enhance Design/ UX across devices** - Your website/ application's design and outlook are the icings on the cake that decide how long your customers are going to spend their time on your online store. Therefore, **optimize your UX (User Experience) to ensure that your customers easily navigate through to the checkout and beyond**. Here are some ways to help you do just that:

- Create a responsive template that automatically adapts to the visitor's device.
- Optimize elements such as color, text, size, etc, to make browsing compelling.
- Incorporate diverse and interactive content on your website such as photos, videos, social media icons, etc.

☑ **12) Make your checkout process seamless** - **The checkout experience you provide is pivotal to conversions** as about <u>69.9% of carts are abandoned here</u>, primarily due to sub-par UX. Here are some pointers to prevent shopping cart abandonment during checkout:

- Make checkout easy for customers by enabling the guest checkout option, displaying product availability, summary, etc.
- Improve checkout design with proper usage of CTA (Call-To-Action) buttons.
- Provide secure payment options by displaying trust badges and certifications.
- Integrate with multiple payment gateways instead of forcing your customers to choose from limited options.

☑ **13) Regularly monitor analytics to see what's working** - The key to complete website optimization lies in keeping your website updated. To do that, **frequently check your website analytics to see what's working (and what's not)**. Keeping track of the data is paramount to analyzing your audience's behavior. For example, you can find your answers to questions such as "Why do we have a high bounce rate during checkout?"

7-in-10 consumers admitted that a page's loading speed impacts their decision to buy from an e-commerce business

The average e-commerce shopping cart abandonment rate is 69.9%

89%
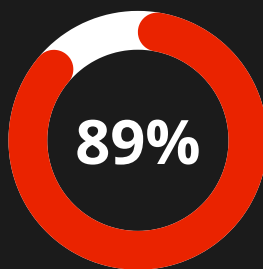
Nearly 90% of online shoppers will never return to a website after a bad user experience

67.6%

On the first page alone, the first five organic results account for 67.6% of all the clicks

Source: HubSpot and Baymard

Once you've taken effective decisions to help your marketing and development teams, here's a little something for your inventory managers to equip themselves to meet the growing consumer demand.

☑ **14) Manage inventory to avoid availability issues** – Holidays usually come with a huge inventory problem. Either your products grow high in demand and frustrate your customers by getting "out-of-stock" or fall in demand and cost your business heavily by getting overstocked. Therefore, a good ploy would be to **frequently manage your inventories and gain the ability to predict the items that would surge in demand**.

☑ **15) Make use of a third-party logistics (3PL) partner** – With the global supply chain in heavy distress since the pandemic, Inventory Management has come up with fresh demands such as automation, AI, multiple warehouses, etc. While it can be difficult and expensive to implement all of this on your own, you can **outsource your Inventory Management needs to a 3PL provider**, for a cost-efficient and more reliable supply chain network.

☑ **16) Communicate product details to reduce unwanted returns** – The increased volume of returns flowing through the holiday season can make it very difficult to keep track of inventories. However, most of these returns are indeed size and fit related Therefore, **optimize your product pages with accurate product descriptions, sizing charts**, etc, and reduce such unwanted returns.

37% and 27%

Fulfillment and inventory management are expected to attract the most investments in 2022

62%

62% of retailers mentioned human error from the manual process as the **#1** issue in inventory and fulfillment

36%
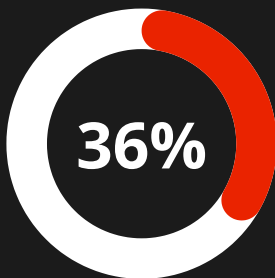
36% of retailers are already making the switch to automating their inventory management

The average cost to fulfill an order takes up 70% of the total order value

Source: Deloitte and Conveyco

The holiday season is your chance to make more sales than the rest of the year combined. Therefore, make sure you have everything you need to maximize your holiday revenue.

Without further ado, let's look at how you can improve your holiday sales and have a successful season.

☑ **17) Offer customer convenience via multi-channel selling** - Selling your products on multiple platforms such as:

- Own e-commerce website
- Marketplaces
- Social commerce, etc

Helps you **maximize sales by opening doors to new markets** and by improving brand recognition.

☑ **18) Enable customers to shop via Social Media platforms** – In the age of convenience, it is wise to **reach customers where they spend most of their time**. Apart from just targeting your customers with marketing campaigns on social media, you can also follow the footsteps of major brands and make effective use of social commerce and sell your products directly on Meta's platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.
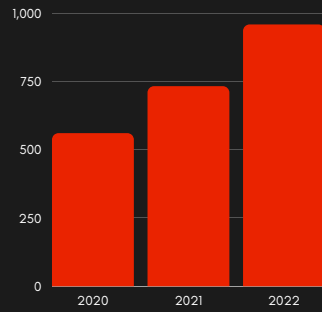
30%
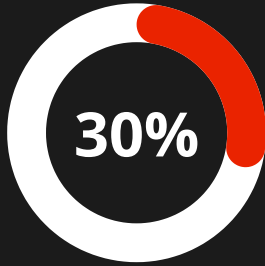
Retailers who don't sell on multiple channels miss out on up to 30% of sales

53%

53% of retailers are adopting tools to help them sell in various channels
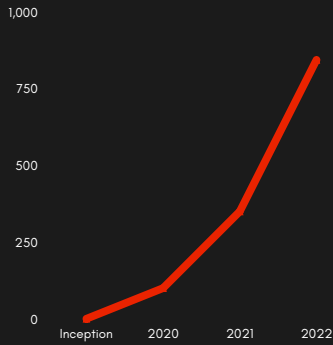
Using 3+ sales channels increase order rates by 494%

Worldwide Social commerce sales will account for $958 billion in 2022

Source: Fit Small Business and Statista

E-commerce businesses saw a <u>50% increase in support ticket volume</u> during the 5-day BFCM period in 2021. This translates to the fact that customers' anticipation is at its peak during times like the holiday season (when order volumes are huge) and we're sure your support agents can't agree more.

This is your time to empower your support reps to properly address customer issues and use the opportunity to:

- Display your strong commitment to the high standard of customer experience you offer.
- Build a loyal customer base.

Here's how you can do just that.

☑️ **19) Offer a live chat option 24/7** - The holiday season is a time where issues such as common queries crop up more. Therefore, it is wise to **enable a live chat option all round the clock** for distressed customers, who want their issues resolved in an instant to ensure customer satisfaction.

☑️ **20) Make use of Chatbots** - Having support reps work round the clock can be difficult at times. Therefore, back it up by automating customer support and incorporating <u>support chatbots</u> to **make query resolution self-service** with low or even zero support interactions. Chatbots make sure that trivial issues like customers unable to find something on the website are eliminated.

✅ **21) Take proactive measures to resolve issues** - Do you know what's the best way to resolve issues? The answer is to deal with such issues even before your customers knew an issue existed. With the help of modern support-friendly technologies, you can <u>empower your support team to proactively resolve issues</u> and **take preemptive action before discrepancies impact your customers**.

81% of customers find it helpful when the website has a proactive chat window
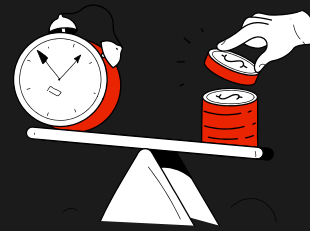
By 2023, Chatbots are expected to save 5 billion hours of query time and $1 million in annual customer service costs

33%

33% of Americans would consider switching companies after having dealt with poor customer service

Businesses have seen a 20% reduction in call volumes by using automated chatbots

Source: Freshdesk, Kinsta, Gnani

1-in-3 customers will stop shopping with a brand after just ONE instance of a bad post-purchase (shipping + delivery + returns) experience.

Delivery issues during the holiday season can create a negative impact on your customer satisfaction metrics. And what makes them worse is the fact that these issues are often out of your control.

Therefore, optimize your post–purchase game in order to make your customer happy even when they face a delivery issue.

Here are some ways for you to do just that.

✅ **22) Partner with different shipping carriers** - Like previously mentioned, the holiday season is a time when your shipping volumes are huge. This makes accommodating incoming orders and sending out customers' parcels on time difficult. **Consider doing business with multiple shipping carriers**, based on their strengths and your shipping needs to avoid such scenarios.

✅ **23) Provide multiple delivery options** – Customers have increased delivery expectations, some want their deliveries fast, and some want their deliveries cheap (or even free!). To cater to the needs of all these customers, you need to **provide multiple delivery options such as same-day, two-day, or Buy Online Pick-up In-Store (BOPIS)/Curbside pick-up**. If the customers are okay with longer windows, you can bear the cost of shipping and offer free deliveries, as a marketing tactic.

☑ **24) Employ real-time shipment tracking** - Tracking your shipments in real-time makes it easy for you to **keep a watch on your packages in transit across carriers, services, and locations** and identify potential issues around deliveries. You can also extend the capabilities of real-time visibility by making sure your customers can seamlessly track their orders via order tracking pages and know at a glance what's happening with their orders.

☑ **25) Keep customers updated via shipping notifications** - Apart from enabling your customers to track their orders, you can as well send post-purchase transactional Emails, SMS, and WhatsApp notifications to **keep your customers in the loop of their orders** throughout the delivery lifecycle. This can help in reducing your customers' anxiety in the most anxious stage of their journey.

☑ **26) Provide an on-brand delivery experience - Make order tracking an extension of your product purchasing journey** by providing branded delivery experiences via shipping notifications and [tracking pages](#).

- Include brand elements such as fonts, color schemes, design templates, etc (that align with the rest of your website and holiday theme).
- Cross-sell your products via personalized promotions and recommendations that go well together as holiday combos and intrigue your customers.
- You can also offer discounts and include other marketing assets on your tracking page and transactional emails to bring your customer back to your online store.

All of this drives customer delight and doubles your chances of driving repeat sales.

☑ **27) Collect customer feedback to improve the delivery experience** - Once your customers receive their orders, you can ask for their feedback on how the delivery experience was. You can then use this information to **make better shipping decisions and optimize the experience** as well. This way, your customers will be impressed with your efforts and will prefer you over your competitors.

70%
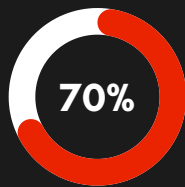
Sending regular order status updates reduces delivery inquiries by 70%

80%
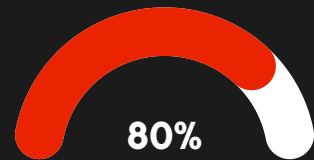
Personalized shipping notifications have an open rate of 80%

30%

Branded delivery experiences lead to a 30% increase in customer delight and brand recall

Personalized recommendations during order tracking moments lead to a 25% lift in repeat purchase rates

Source: LateShipment.com

Up to 30% of eCommerce orders are returned and 96% of the customers will shop with a store again if it offers seamless returns and exchanges. Make sure your returns strategy is easy to process for the customer, while also not compromising your revenue. Here's how you can do it:

☑ **28) Have a transparent return policy - Draft a clear-cut returns policy** and publish it on your website. Make sure there are distinguished CTAs that connect to your support team just in case. Brownie points if you could get a set of FAQs published as a continuation of the returns policy. The best ploy with your returns policy is not keeping it too strict to repel customers yet not too lenient to encourage fraudulent returns.

☑ **29) Make returns easy for your customers -** Over 80% of the customers will prefer brands that offer easy returns. Therefore, **make your returns process seamless** with:

- Faster returns initiation
- Flexible return methods
- Seamless returns status tracking

All of this can help in reducing customer anxiety and pushing your customers towards their next purchase.

CREATE A FRICTIONLESS RETURNS STRATEGY

☑ **30) Provide flexible return methods -** Provide options such as prepaid labels, free shipping, or bonus credit as incentives to encourage customers to go for store credits, or exchange offers instead of returns. This way, you can **convert returns into repeat purchases**.

☑ **31) Automate your returns process -** Automating your returns management by integrating with a <u>returns management</u> system helps you:

- Free up your support agents to address more pressing issues and
- Drastically reduce time spent per return request and inbound conversation volume.

Also, **Returns automation helps you keep the control of your returns centralized** and enables easy configuration, management, and tracking of returns status.

96%
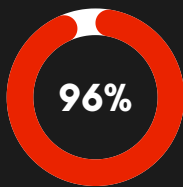
96% of shoppers will buy again from brands that offers easy returns

80%
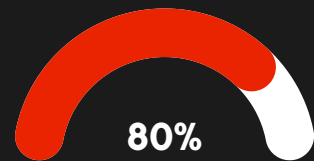
A great returns experience converts returns into repeat purchase by 4x

35%

Over 35% of items are returned during the holiday season

6-in-10 shoppers check the returns policy before making a purchase

☑ **32) Prepare your business for last-minute shoppers** - Not all prospects shop on time. A majority of them wait till the last minute to get started with their holiday shopping. For these shoppers, you need to **come up with a separate strategy for last-minute shoppers** that involves marketing campaigns and post-purchase essentials.

Here's what you can do:

- Create a sense of last-minute urgency and provide them with extra benefits such as gift cards to make them hit that buy button.
- Be aware of and communicate holiday shipping deadlines with your customers to prepare them for possible delays.
- Set the right expectations for your customers around post-purchase to mitigate the impact of the increased chances of delivery issues and support tickets.

FedEx Holiday Schedule 2022

Shipping deadlines and details

» **DOWNLOAD**

UPS Holiday Schedule 2022

Shipping deadlines and details

» **DOWNLOAD**

Knowing the holiday operations schedule of your carrier(s) can help you plan your shipments for the holiday season without succumbing to delays.

☑ **33) Gain post-purchase superpowers with your integrations** - You probably use a lot of tools to help with your business practices that can delight your customers at different stages of their journey from casual social media shopping to order returns and ensure providing outstanding CX.

Extend your capabilities by integrating the tools you use such as:

- Self-hosted e-commerce website
- E-commerce platforms like Shopify
- Marketplaces like Amazon
- Inventory and Order Management platforms like Zoho Inventory and Linnworks
- CRM systems like Hubspot
- Delivery Management solutions like LateShipment.com
- Help desk tools like Gorgias and Freshdesk, etc.

Seamlessly integrating all your tech stack can help you take charge of your customer's journey and ultimately increase sales.
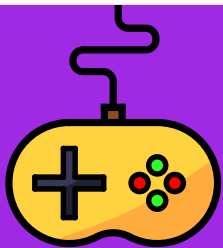
PLUG & PLAY

To effortlessly manage your Customer Experiences, particularly in the post-purchase phase

LEARN MORE

☑️ **34) Smell what's cooking in the retail and e-commerce world** - Stay updated with the plans that retail business and thought leaders come up with for the holiday season and adapt stuff that might suit your business. This can indirectly help you stay in the trend and make advancements without having to scratch your heads on strategies.

- Apple is expanding its advertising business by displaying relevant ads in-app on TV, maps, books, podcasts, etc. The reason behind this initiative is to track customer data across apps and use it for retargeting. This way, brands can increase the chances of consumers coming back to the website or app and making a purchase.

- Amazon has been planning to add revenue streams for the holiday season like a second Prime Day-like event for its Prime members to compensate for inflationary pressures. This is seen as a countermeasure to Amazon's self-realization after passing some of its costs such as holiday surcharges and fuel and inflation surcharges to sellers.

- Twitter has come up with a Spaces topic on how e-commerce brands can stay ahead of the holiday season push by sharing relevant marketing tips based on data from Twitter Business. The social media giant suggests brands start with maintaining awareness of upcoming major events, looking into trending hashtags, making use of polls, and standing out with the help of visual assets such as videos, etc.

- Google too, is holding a virtual event on Tuesday, the 30th of August, to help merchants prepare for the holidays. The Think Retail event will kick off with a keynote presentation covering the latest holiday-shopping insights, category trends, consumer behaviors, and Google solutions. The sessions will include topics covering growing omnichannel sales, how to grow online sales during the holiday season using Google's suite of products, etc.

- Retail giants such as Walmart, Target, and Macy's have kickstarted an un-official early holiday shopping season for the third consecutive year in the form of a rare clearance sale. This is seen as a move to counter both overstocking from excess inventory as well as spur customers to shop more with them amidst inflationary pressures.

This Holiday season, the focus of e-commerce experts has been on mitigating the impact of inflation and spurring customers to spend more.

As we mentioned earlier, planning for a time like the holiday season is never easy.

That is why market leaders have already begun with the goal of getting their hands on a great holiday season sale.

This checklist is a starter to help you create a fail-proof holiday shipping strategy.

Starting a wee bit early can always help you in making edits or additions to your plan and avoid last-minute cramming.

And most importantly,

Happy holidays!!!

This holiday season, exceed your customers' expectations and bring home their loyalty for life.

» KNOW HOW

LateShipment.com is the world's only tool for **everything post-purchase** – combining shipping refunds with everything you need to create memorable delivery experiences and effectively manage returns. Explore LateShipment.com's best-of-breed tools to achieve post-purchase excellence in eCommerce retail.

Delivery Experience Management (DEM) platform - For businesses to effortlessly bridge the post-purchase CX gap and discover new ways to delight and retain customers.

Parcel Audit and Shipping Refunds - For businesses to effortlessly recover up to 20% of shipping costs through refund claims and drive informed choices through in-depth shipping intelligence.

Returns Management platform – Ecommerce returns are not a profit or shipping problem. In fact, they are a retention and revenue opportunity. Take advantage of our powerful, self-service returns platform, built to make returns hassle-free and maintain profitability.

LateShipment.com seamlessly integrates with all your tech stacks whether CRM software, eCommerce platform, order management system (OMS), or customer support helpdesk solution. The best part is that it takes less than 2 minutes to see LateShipment.com in action without any change to your existing workflow.

The value we add to businesses is most evident when experienced first-hand.

Connect with our experts to know how you can make all the above a reality with just a swish-n-flick

Get in touch
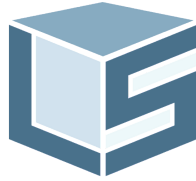
LATESHIPMENT.COM

TRUSTED BY
1000s
OF BUSINESSES WORLDWIDE

CUSTOMERS IN
40+
COUNTRIES

100M+
SHIPMENTS TRACKED

FEATURED IN
20+
MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

The Washington Post | WWD
RETAIL DIVE | MULTICHANNEL MERCHANT
SOURCING JOURNAL | LA Times

HEADQUARTERS

4855 LB McLeod Road,
Orlando, FL 32811, USA

BRANCHES & AFFILIATES

CANADA | UK | ITALY | INDIA

+1 (888) 930-5934 | support@lateshipment.com
www.lateshipment.com