



ResponsibleRetailer

What makes a responsible retailer?

Fly by night

A 'fly by night' company, is a commonly heard phrase describing firms that have been set up in order to extract the maximum amount of money from the public in the quickest time, with little or no attention paid to customer satisfaction.

EVERYTHING MUST GO

Making a purchase from a dealer like this usually means that it all goes **WRONG** as there is usually no after sales, support or warranty!



Or responsible retailer

On the other hand, a Responsible Retailer will be solvent and have been in operation for several years with a proven record of offering excellent customer care, this can come in many forms including technical advice, guaranteed efficient delivery of goods, and an after-sales service.

What's required from a responsible retailer?

Branding and merchandising

Branding and merchandising is at the heart of every manufacturers' marketing and sales strategy, and protection of their brand image must be a priority. Responsible retailers therefore respect a brand and its place in the market. Products will be priced, marketed and displayed appropriate to corporate guidelines and in ways that are designed to maximise sales but at the same time reflect and retain brand values.

Trained staff and customer care

Customer care is incredibly important not only closing sales, ensuring satisfaction and encouraging return business. It's essential that customer facing staff have a thorough knowledge of any product range for which they have responsibility and are trained to recognised levels of competence, with the ability to communicate easily and effectively.

For online retailers customer care would be in the form of a helpline which is contactable at all reasonable hours by various methods e.g. phone, email, post. Any response should be within 24 hours of the initial contact.

Accurate and up to date information

All information on a retailer's website needs information that is 100% reliable. This avoids queries, returns, bad feeling while at the same time builds customer confidence in the website and what it is selling. So product descriptions, specifications, pricing, contact information, list of stores and locations, hours of business, delivery details and T&Cs should all be current and correct.



Security & Data Protection

Secure payment methods

To meet the needs and preferences of customers, varied payment methods should be offered and these must be through a recognised secure payment service provider that is fully audited and compliant with current Credit Card Reader encryption standards.

Customer purchases can be assisted by flexible terms for paying over a set term, and 'pay no money today' offers might be considered.

To avoid misunderstandings, terms and conditions must always be visible and clearly understandable.



Privacy and data protection

Legislation concerning Data Protection demands that a responsible firm only collects information that is needed for a specific purpose. This information should be kept secure, relevant and up-to-date, and should only be held for as long as it is needed. Access to the data must be limited to those with a definite need to know, but should be open to inspection if requested by the person who has provided it.

Many people do not understand what a website 'cookie' is, so to avoid confusion and distrust, the site's 'cookies' policy needs to be fully explained and, by law, the choice to accept or not accept cookies offered.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light purple button-down shirt, is smiling and holding a white rectangular sign that says "OPEN" in large, black, serif capital letters. The sign is hanging from a chain. The background is a blurred indoor setting, likely a store or office.

OPEN

Open for business 7 days a week

For online retailers, a Show Site should also be available for customers to visit. This should be open seven days a week with a good level of stock, more than 80% of the product range, and displays that show product benefits and features to the greatest effect.

Security & Data Protection



After sales support and returns

Customers need to be assured that, after buying a product, any queries are dealt with quickly and efficiently by trained and knowledgeable staff who are contactable seven days a week. They must have the ability to problem solve, explain products clearly and carefully, and offer effective solutions if a problem cannot be rectified. The return of goods and reimbursement will be governed by Consumer Contracts Regulations.

E-commerce Reviews

Something to shout about!

So that potential customers can make informed decisions, independent review systems such as Trust Pilot are playing an increasingly important role in e-commerce. Good reviews are instrumental in building trust in websites and increasing sales of their products. However, all reviews and comments should be monitored and any problems investigated and resolved.



