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# Integrating Clicklink™ and Boomerang™ to improve the experience of John Lewis customers



# The Clipper Logistics and John Lewis Partnership relationship has been developed over many years.

It now includes a wide range of services from inbound pre-retail, forward order management, returns management for both stores and online activity. Most recently, the relationship created Clicklink™ – an award-winning retail focused Click and Collect solution.

In 2015, the two businesses collaborated to create a specialist Click and Collect service, Clicklink™, designed to integrate seamlessly with Clipper's market-leading returns process Boomerang™, to meet the evolving demands of the modern shopper. The services were deployed across John Lewis and Waitrose stores, enabling a more efficient supply chain solution which operates 7 days per week. With a late evening cut off, the online Click and Collect orders are collected, collated and delivered in a retail-friendly manner to the retailers' store estate the following day – every day of the week.

The additional benefit of a 7 day a week service to the retail store estate is the ability to rapidly manage returning inventory. The returning transport fleet deliver any returns directly into the Clipper Boomerang™ return management service, allowing items to be made ready for resale much faster – to both maximise the use of the inventory and minimize customer dissatisfaction regarding refund speed. With Boomerang™ integrated alongside the Clicklink™ service, the retailer has two powerful tools to ensure optimised flow.

# the customer

**John Lewis was founded in 1864, and since then has become a strong player in the UK retail arena.**

Today, there are 50 John Lewis stores located across the UK, and more than 350 Waitrose stores.

The business is the largest example of worker co-ownership, where the workforce are also partners in the business.

As a department store, John Lewis stocks a diverse and comprehensive range of products, typically more than 320,000 separate lines throughout a store. The [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com) website stocks over 200,000 products across fashion, beauty, home, giftware and electricals, and is consistently ranked amongst the top online shopping retailers in the UK.



# the challenge

Recent years have seen consumers increasingly demand speed and convenience in their order delivery and returns options, to fit around their **hectic lifestyles**. With available delivery and returns choices increasingly impacting consumer buying decisions, it was vital that John Lewis could put in place an effective service solution;

enabling them to satisfy customer demands and expectations and establish a competitive advantage.

The Clicklink™ service was developed to provide a 7 day a week retail focussed solution. The solution was designed with the retail store at the heart of the process – how should parcels arrive at the store; how should the store systems be notified of arrival; how should the customer be notified that the parcel is ready for collection; how should the parcel be stored whilst awaiting collection. The clever use of technology and the retail logistics backbone of Clipper provided the infrastructure needed, and the retail expertise of John Lewis ensured the solution was designed with retailers in mind.

The outbound process is only half of the story – a further benefit of Click and Collect at a retail store is the reinforcement of the customer/brand relationship – therefore the store is also an obvious choice for a rapid return experience – and this also provides a further sales opportunity for the retailer.

John Lewis customers enjoy the benefit and convenience of choosing to return their Click and Collect orders in both John Lewis and Waitrose stores. As returning inventory has grown in-line with Click and Collect and online orders, it was necessary to develop a returns process based on efficiency and agility.

Historically, the retail stores collated stock for return and this was routed back to the returns centre utilising the Waitrose and John Lewis' primary network fleet movements. This could result in a returning item passing through a number of DC locations before reaching the processing centre.

After already working together and combining their respective knowledge of the retail sector to create Clicklink™, the joint team then set about implementing and integrating the Clipper Boomerang™ returns management solution in order to provide a rapid, end-to-end, process.



# the solution

**Clipper and John Lewis worked together to implement Clipper's specialist returns solution, Boomerang™, across John Lewis and Waitrose stores.**

Boomerang™ is designed to help retailers to respond to the growing pressure placed upon their returns management.



Developing on the traditional systems and processes which are no longer suitable for the demands of modern retail, and rising rate of returns.

The Clicklink™ solution operates across 7 days and provides a daily service to all retail locations for outbound store deliveries. The return fleet is integrated with Boomerang™ which ensures that returned items are delivered direct to the returns processing centre within 24 hours of receipt, allowing faster cycles and improving the chances of resale at full value. The Boomerang™ solution streamlines the traditional and extensive returns process, designed to remove complex barriers associated with the quick turnaround of returned products back into inventory.

The solution integrates quality and compliance measures into warehouse processes, feeding goods directly into the supply chain, and enabling quality checking and repairs within the warehouse.

This helps to deliver a hassle-free and high-quality customer service, providing the quick returns processing that customers desire.

By implementing Boomerang™, John Lewis have seen a reduction in handling and transportation costs, processes have become quicker and more simplified, minimising risk, maximising the value of returned goods and improving cash flow; taking the cost, risk and complexity out of returns. New orders can now also be fulfilled using products from within the returns stream, allowing returned stock to be resold quicker and reducing inventory tied up within the returns process.

This closed-loop returns processing solution helps to deliver high visibility throughout the entire process, ensuring advanced stock control and optimisation of service levels. This solution is highly scalable, meaning it can grow with the business and demand.



# the results

**By streamlining and simplifying both the store Click and Collect and returns processes,**

Clipper has helped John Lewis to drastically reduce the processing time for deliveries and returns, greatly enhancing the customer experience.

The time taken to action customer refunds has been significantly reduced and improved visibility throughout the supply chain means that customer experience and levels of trust have seen huge improvements, which in turn has led to higher order volumes.

The implementation of a more streamlined returns solution and integration of Boomerang™ has sped up the returns process. Returned products are available for resale quicker, and in-demand items are now able to be fast tracked for repacking and sent out to a new recipient the next day, increasing John Lewis' chances of selling stock at full price, which is especially important for seasonal stock.

As well as having a positive impact on customer service, brand protection and optimisation of service levels, this has also meant that John Lewis are able to better protect their margins.

The combined service is enabling John Lewis to respond to evolving consumer behaviour and has helped with developments in omni-channel retail.

## Client testimonial

"Having had a close, collaborative relationship with Clipper for many years, we know that their ability, experience and knowledge in the retail logistics space is unparalleled.

Having worked with Clipper to develop and implement Clicklink™, we knew that they were the right partner to help us create a returns solution – returns are growing at such a rate that we needed a more flexible, scalable and effective solution in place.

The fact that we've been able to integrate Boomerang™ alongside Clicklink™ is providing yet more added value to our partnership and has developed a solution that is perfectly tailored to the demands of modern retail and the ever evolving and growing expectations of customers."

**Ged Keogh-Peters, Logistics Director, John Lewis.**

## Clipper testimonial

"We're pleased to be continuing to support John Lewis in developing their solutions to meet customer demand and expectation. As a very highly regarded and trusted retailer, with a clear focus on quality and service, an agile supply chain is a vital ingredient in the operation.

Both Boomerang™ and Clicklink™, perfectly translate our promise of agility matched by ability. We believe that the development, implementation and integration of these tools has created a best practice solution, which is benefitting not only the John Lewis business, but also, their growing customer base.

Boomerang™ is a market leading–returns management process, which integrates seamlessly with Clicklink™ to create a revolutionary partnership, helping to reshape the way that multichannel retail operates. Through these solutions, we are helping brands to enhance customer loyalty and experience, capitalise on face-to-face sales opportunities, reduce investment in stock and working capital, whilst maximising sales at full margin."

**Richard Ball, Managing Director, Clicklink™**

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