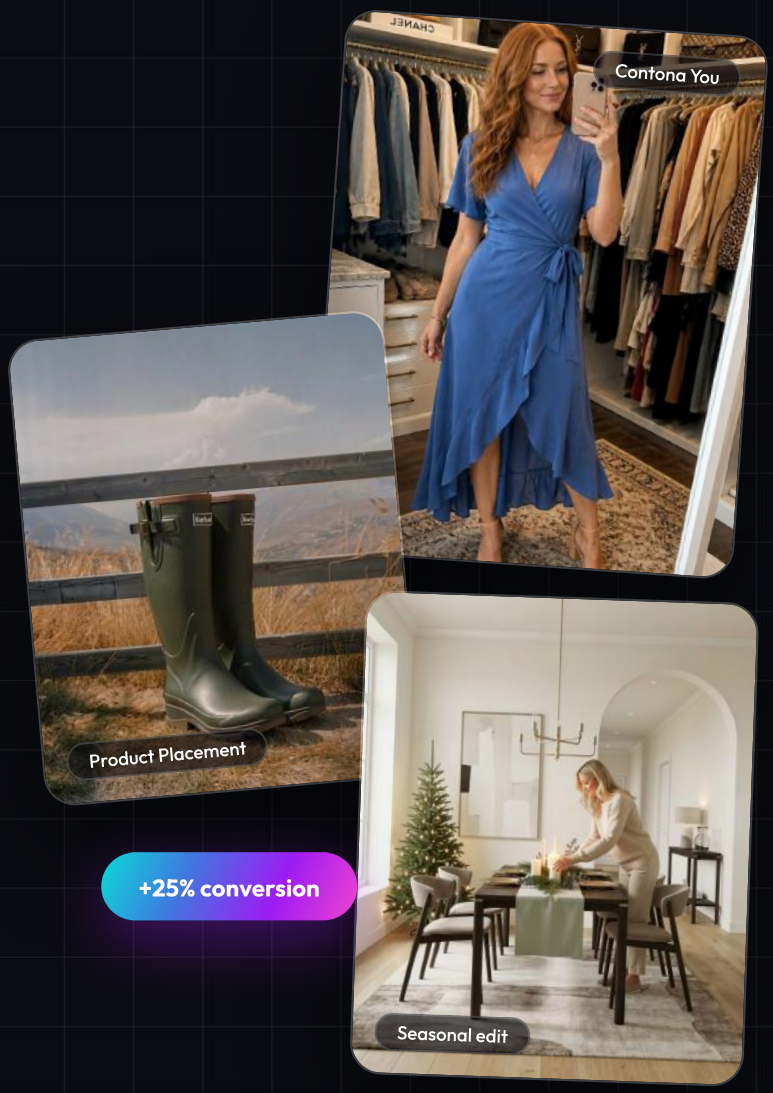
Contona



THE 2027 ECOMMERCE GUIDE

The thoughtful buyer.

How to lift conversion and cut returns in the year shoppers slow down, look harder and buy with intent. Ten moves for ecommerce teams, with hints and tips on doing them faster.

Conversion | Returns | Product pages | Retention

BEFORE WE START

Shoppers haven't stopped buying. They've started thinking.

Every year has a word. For 2027, ours is **thoughtful**. Customers are researching longer, comparing harder and spending on fewer, better things. That's not bad news. It just means the product page has more work to do.

This guide pulls together what ecommerce teams, merchandisers and retention specialists are seeing on the ground, plus the practical moves that close the gap between "I like it" and "I'm buying it". Four of them are the big ones. Six more make the big ones work harder. Where Contona can do the heavy lifting, we've said so. Where it can't, we've said that too.

00	**2027: the year of thoughtful buying**	The context
01	**Product photography**	Show it where they'll live with it
02	**Product video**	Brand, trust and how to, in one place
03	**Try-on and room visualisers**	Let them live the dream first
04	**Reflective commerce**	Bring them back to what they loved
05	**Message match**	Keep the promise the ad made
06	**Social proof**	Let other buyers do the talking
07	**Product page clarity**	Make the details impossible to miss
08	**AI discovery**	Be the answer the assistant gives
09	**Content velocity**	Fresh beats perfect
10	**Measure what matters**	Read your returns like a brief

00 · THE CONTEXT

2027 is the year of thoughtful buying.

Consumers are analysing more and buying less often. Bigger decisions, smaller overall spend. Research, trust and conversion all take longer before anyone commits.

21% → 9%

Fall in shoppers buying online daily, in a single year. Fewer impulse buys, more deliberate ones.

Salsify, 2026 Consumer Research

60%

of consumers now visit a physical store specifically to check a product before buying it online.

Salsify, 2026 Consumer Research

Quality > price

Quality and performance now outrank affordability when shoppers decide what something is worth.

NIQ, Consumer Outlook: Guide to 2027

1 in 5

online orders come back. The average ecommerce return rate sits around 20.8%.

Capital One Shopping, 2026

OUR JOB IN 2027

Make the decision friction free.

When a shopper is weighing up a purchase for days, every unanswered question is a reason to wait, and every surprise on delivery is a return. The brands that win won't shout louder. They'll remove doubt faster.

00 · THE CONSIDERED JOURNEY

Where the friction hides.

A thoughtful buyer moves through six questions before they keep a product. Each one is a place to win them, or lose them. Here's what they're asking, what usually gets in the way, and which chapter fixes it.

STAGE	WHAT THEY'RE ASKING	COMMON FRICTION	CHAPTER
SEE IT **Discover**	Does this catch my eye, and is it for someone like me?	Generic imagery that could be anyone's	01 · 05
LEARN IT **Research**	What is it, how does it work, how big is it?	Thin pages, buried specs, no video	02 · 07
TRUST IT **Validate**	Do other people like it? Can I trust this brand?	No proof, no reviews near the buy box	06 · 08
OWN IT **Imagine**	Will it suit me, fit me, look right in my home?	Guesswork. The single biggest cause of returns	03
BUY IT **Decide**	Is now the right time? Is this still the one?	Abandoned baskets with no reason to return	04
LOVE IT **Keep**	Is it what I expected?	Mismatch between page and parcel	07 · 10

The pattern to notice: conversion and returns are the same problem viewed from opposite ends. A shopper who couldn't picture the product either doesn't buy it, or buys it and sends it back. Fix the picture and you fix both.

01 · PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY

01 Show it where they'll live with it.

A cut-out on white tells a shopper what a product is. A photo in the right setting tells them what it's like to own it. In 2027 they need both.

WHY IT MATTERS

Thoughtful buyers are looking for themselves in your imagery. A sofa in a sprawling loft doesn't help someone in a terraced house. A jacket on a catwalk doesn't help someone walking the dog in drizzle.

Context photography does two jobs at once: it sells the lifestyle and it sets honest expectations about scale, colour and use. That second job is what protects you from returns.

34%

of holiday shoppers who returned something blamed misleading product images.

Akeno survey via SupplyChain247

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

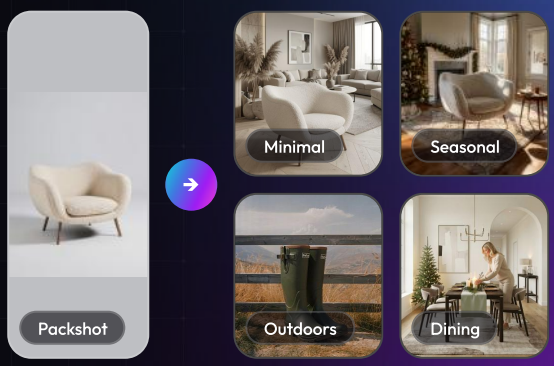
1. **Build a minimum image set** for every hero product: clean hero, in context, in use, detail and texture, scale reference, and every variant.
2. **Shoot for your real customers**, not your mood board. Match settings to your top two or three buyer personas: city flat, family home, outdoor, gifting.
3. **Show scale on purpose.** A hand, a person, a doorway or a familiar object next to the product answers the question before it's asked.
4. **Photograph every variant**, not just the bestseller. The oat one returns more when the shopper only saw the grey one.
5. **Crop for mobile first.** Most considered purchases are researched on a phone, even when they're bought on a laptop.

WITH CONTONA

New scenes from the photos you already own.

Place your product into the settings your customers actually live in, sync it to a style you love, or generate every colourway from a single shot. No studio, no models, no six week wait.

Contona Create · Product Placement · Style Sync · Product Variant



One product shot in. A scene for every buyer out.

02 · PRODUCT VIDEO

02 Brand, trust and how to. One page.

The product page is where the decision happens, so that's where the video should live. Not on a YouTube channel nobody visits.

WHY IT MATTERS

Video answers the questions photos can't: how it moves, how it drapes, how it folds, how big it really is next to a person. For considered purchases it also does the reassuring that a sales assistant would do in store.

The best performing product pages mix three types of video in one gallery: **brand** (why this, why us), **trust** (real use, durability, customers) and **education** (set up, sizing, care).

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

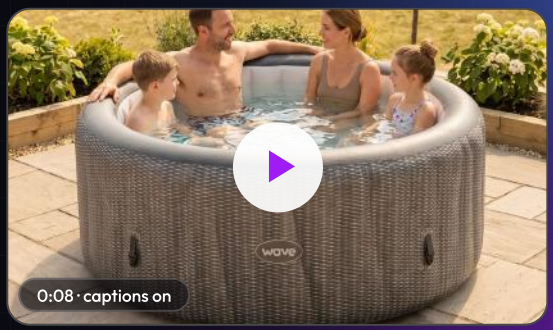
1. **Put video in gallery position two or three**, not hidden in a tab below the fold. If they have to look for it, they won't.
2. **Keep it short and silent friendly.** Six to fifteen seconds, captions on, product in frame from the first second.
3. **Script from your customer service inbox.** Turn your three most asked questions into three short clips. Fewer emails, fewer returns.
4. **Show the unglamorous bits.** Unboxing, assembly, the zip, the drain valve. Honest beats polished when money is tight.
5. **Reuse everything.** The same clip should work on the product page, in Reels and in your post purchase emails.

WITH CONTONA

One product shot in. Product video out.

Turn existing product images into on-brand video for product pages and social, sized for every placement. No shoot, no edit, no suspiciously large production invoice.

Contona Motion | PDP video | Reels formats



Brand | Trust | How to

03 · TRY-ON AND ROOM VISUALISERS

03 Let them live the dream before they buy.

The hardest question in ecommerce is "will it look right on me, or in my home?" Virtual try-on and room visualisers answer it on the product page.

WHY IT MATTERS

Imagination is where online shopping loses to the high street. In store you hold it up, sit on it, try it on. Online you guess, and guessing is expensive: it slows conversion and it fills your returns bay.

Visualisers turn "I think it might work" into "I can see it works". For fashion and accessories that's try-on. For furniture, flooring and anything that lives in a room or garden, it's a room visualiser.

+25% · 15%

Increase in conversions and reduction in returns seen by Contona customers using virtual try-on and room visualisation.

Contona customer data

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

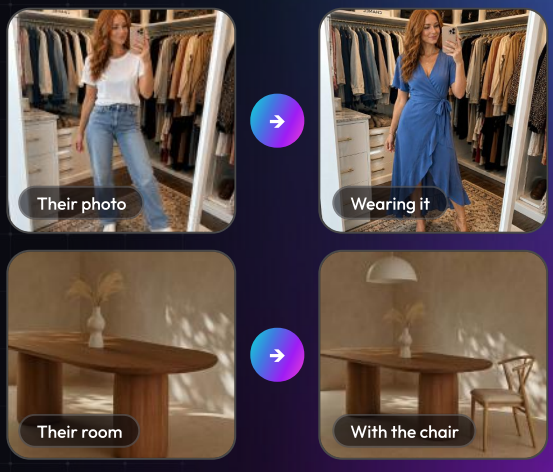
1. **Put the button in the buy box**, next to Add to basket. A visualiser in a tab is a visualiser nobody uses.
2. **Remove every step you can.** One photo, no account, no app download. Each extra field halves the people who finish.
3. **Prioritise high consideration, high return lines** first: big ticket, colour sensitive or fit sensitive products.
4. **Keep the result.** A shopper's own render is the most persuasive image you'll ever have of that product. Use it again in email.
5. **Measure users vs non-users** on conversion, order value and return rate. It's the cleanest test you'll run all year.

WITH CONTONA

Their room. Your product. Less guesswork.

Contona You and Contona Space sit on your product page, inherit your store design and go live without theme edits. Shoppers upload one photo and see your product on them, or in their space. Indoors and outdoors.

Contona You | Contona Space | Built for Shopify



04 · REFLECTIVE COMMERCE

04 Bring them back to what they loved.

Thoughtful buyers leave. That's normal. What matters is what you show them when they come back.

WHY IT MATTERS

Most abandoned basket emails are a product thumbnail and a discount code. But a considered shopper didn't leave because of price alone. They left mid thought, and the best way to restart that thought is to show them the exact content they engaged with.

Reflective commerce means your follow up reflects their journey: the try-on image of them in the jacket, the render of the chair in their living room, the campaign creative they clicked.

~70%

of online shopping baskets are abandoned before checkout. Your return path matters as much as your first impression.

Baymard Institute, long running average

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

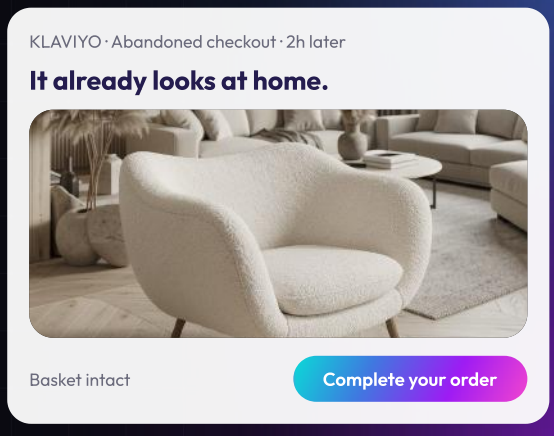
1. **Lead with their visual**, not your logo. "It already looks at home" beats "You left something behind".
2. **Send fewer, better messages.** UK and US shoppers say they prefer fewer, more relevant messages. Three well timed touches beat seven generic ones.
3. **Answer the objection** before offering money off: delivery dates, returns policy, size guidance, finance options.
4. **Hold the discount back.** Train shoppers to wait and they will. Use it as a final nudge, not an opener.
5. **Keep the basket intact** across devices. They researched on the phone, they'll buy on the laptop.

WITH CONTONA

Show people the thing they actually clicked.

Contona feeds try-on images, room renders and campaign creative into your Klaviyo flows, so every abandoned checkout email picks up exactly where the shopper left off.

Contona Reflect | Klaviyo flows | Try-on in email



05 · MESSAGE MATCH

05 Keep the promise the ad made.

A shopper clicks a beautiful lifestyle ad, then lands on a product page with a white background cut-out and no mention of the offer. That's a broken promise, and it costs you.

WHY IT MATTERS

Message match is the simplest conversion lever most stores ignore. When the landing experience looks like the thing that was clicked, shoppers feel they're in the right place and keep going. When it doesn't, they hit back.

It matters more in 2027 because journeys are longer and cross more channels. A shopper might see you on TikTok, read an email and click a Meta ad before buying. Each arrival should feel continuous.

2 to 3

channels reviewed by over half of shoppers before buying, even for everyday and mid range purchases.

Salsify, 2026 Consumer Research

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

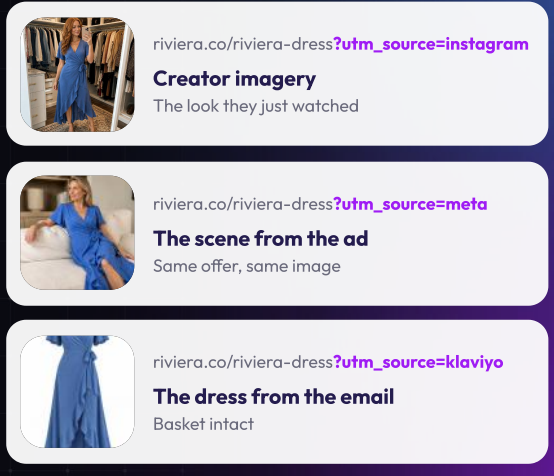
1. **Audit your top ten ads** by spend. Screenshot each one next to its landing page. If they don't look related, fix those first.
2. **Match the hero image** on the landing page to the creative in the ad, and repeat the offer above the fold.
3. **Use UTMs as a brief.** utm_source and utm_campaign tell you where someone came from. Use them to decide what they see.
4. **Dress the store for the moment.** Seasonal and event campaigns should carry through to collection and product pages, not stop at the banner.

WITH CONTONA

Same Shopify store. Different customer experience.

Contona Reflect reads where a shopper came from and overlays the matching campaign imagery onto your product and editorial pages, from Meta, TikTok, display and email.

Contona Reflect | UTM personalisation | Seasonal overlays



06 · SOCIAL PROOF

06 Let other buyers do the talking.

When money is tight, nobody wants to be the first to try something. Proof from real customers is the shortcut through doubt.

WHY IT MATTERS

Thoughtful buyers check reviews, social and marketplaces before they commit. If your product page doesn't carry that proof, they'll go and find it somewhere else, and they might buy it there too.

The most useful proof is specific. "Love it!" helps a little. "True to size, colour exactly as shown, fits a 1.8m wide alcove" helps a lot, and it heads off a return.

Stay put.

If shoppers have to leave your page to find proof, there's a fair chance they'll buy wherever they find it.

Rule of thumb from the field

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

1. **Move reviews up.** A star rating and a count near the price, with photo reviews in or beside the gallery.
2. **Ask better review questions.** Prompt for fit, size, colour accuracy and use case, so reviews answer what future shoppers worry about.
3. **Collect customer photos** with a small incentive. Real homes and real bodies are the most trusted images on the page.
4. **Put trust signals by the button:** delivery date, returns window, warranty, payment options. Decisions stall on unknowns.
5. **Keep it honest.** Use UGC style creative for ads and editorial, and keep customer reviews and their photos strictly real.

WITH CONTONA

UGC style creative, on brand, on demand.

The UGC Generator turns a product image into natural, creator style content for ads, social and editorial, so your paid and organic feeds feel as relatable as your best reviews.

UGC Generator | Contona Create





★★★★★ "Colour is exactly as shown. True to size."

07 · PRODUCT PAGE CLARITY

07 Make the details impossible to miss.

Most "not as described" returns aren't about bad products. They're about good products described badly.

WHY IT MATTERS

Shoppers making bigger decisions read more, but they also skim. If the dimensions are in paragraph six, they'll miss them, guess, and you'll find out at the returns desk.

Clarity is a conversion tool too. A shopper who can find the answer in five seconds keeps moving. A shopper who has to email you probably won't wait for the reply.

1 in 3

shoppers have returned a product because it didn't match its online photos or description.

Digital Commerce 360

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

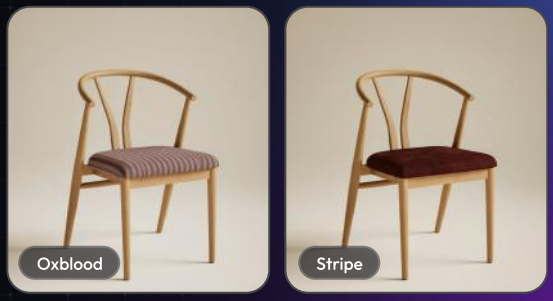
1. **Lead with the deciding facts:** size, materials, what's included, delivery date and total cost, all visible without scrolling on mobile.
2. **Visualise dimensions.** A labelled diagram or a scale photo beats a line of numbers every time.
3. **Say who it's for, and who it isn't for.** Honest fit guidance builds trust and filters out the returns before they happen.
4. **Show the true colour of every variant** in natural light, and flag anything that photographs differently.
5. **Add a comparison table** across a range, so shoppers pick the right model first time instead of ordering two.

WITH CONTONA

Every variant, accurately shown.

Product Variant takes one product image plus your fabric or material swatches and updates the product for each one, so shoppers see the exact colour they're buying, not a guess.

Product Variant | Shopify sync



One product image plus your swatches. Every variant, accurately shown.

08 · AI DISCOVERY

08 Be the answer the assistant gives.

A growing share of research now starts with a question typed or spoken to an AI assistant. Your catalogue needs to be the clearest answer in the room.

WHY IT MATTERS

AI shopping assistants summarise, compare and recommend. They lean heavily on structured product data, clear descriptions, reviews and imagery that shows the product in use.

Thin listings with one photo and a vague title are easy to skip. Rich, consistent listings that answer real questions are easy to recommend.

64%

of shoppers use AI shopping tools to discover or research new products.

Salsify, Ecommerce Pulse Report Q4 2025

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

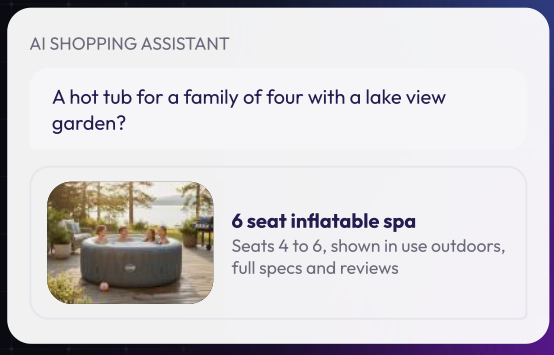
1. **Fill every attribute.** Size, material, colour, use case, room, occasion. If your platform has a field for it, complete it.
2. **Write titles and descriptions for questions.** "Compact two seat sofa for small living rooms" beats "The Harlow".
3. **Use descriptive alt text** on every image. It helps accessibility, search and AI understanding all at once.
4. **Keep data consistent** across your site, Google Merchant Center and marketplaces. Contradictions erode trust, human or machine.
5. **Give each product varied imagery.** Context, scale and in use shots give assistants more to describe and shoppers more to believe.

WITH CONTONA

A richer catalogue, without a bigger team.

Create context, scale and variant imagery for your whole range and publish it straight back to Shopify, so every listing has the depth that assistants and shoppers reward.

Contona Create | Shopify publish back | Catalogue scale



09 · CONTENT VELOCITY

09 Fresh beats perfect.

When perfect takes six weeks and a shoot budget, it usually arrives after the moment has passed.

WHY IT MATTERS

Thoughtful buyers return to your site several times before purchasing. If it looks identical every visit, there's nothing new to nudge them. Seasonal, timely content gives them a reason to look again and a reason to act now.

The gap is rarely ideas. It's time, budget and production. Teams that can turn a brief into live creative in days test more, learn more and stay relevant for longer.

4 days

to launch a seasonal guide that used to take six weeks, with 90% lower asset costs.

Contona customer data

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

1. **Map your 2027 moments now**: sale periods, seasons, gifting, payday, and the events that matter to your category.
2. **Brief in modules.** One concept, cut into hero, PDP, social, email and ads. Plan the set, not the single image.
3. **Refresh your top twenty product pages quarterly.** They earn most of your revenue and deserve most of your attention.
4. **Test creative like you test prices.** Two scenes, two angles, one winner. Small, frequent tests compound.

WITH CONTONA

More ideas. Less production faff.

Contona learns your brand once through the Brand Builder, then turns the products you already have into on-brand campaigns in minutes. Your team ships more briefs in the same quarter.

Brand Builder | Contona Create | Contona Motion



Seasonal guide ~~6 weeks~~ 4 days

10 · MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

10 Read your returns like a brief.

Your returns data is the most honest customer feedback you'll ever get. Most teams file it under operations and never look again.

WHY IT MATTERS

Every return reason is a note about your product content. "Looked different", "smaller than expected", "colour not as shown". These aren't logistics problems. They're briefs for your next photo, video or page update.

Pair that with on-page behaviour, like who used a visualiser, watched a video or read reviews, and you can see exactly which content earns its keep.

$849.9bn

in retail returns projected for the US alone in 2025. Every point you shave off your rate is margin back.

National Retail Federation

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

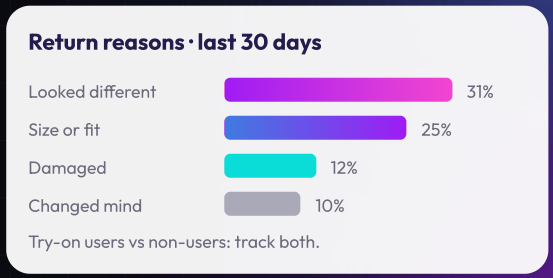
1. **Standardise your return reason codes** so "didn't match photos" and "wrong item" never share a bucket.
2. **Review returns by SKU monthly.** Often a handful of products cause a large share of returns. Fix those pages first.
3. **Compare engaged vs non-engaged shoppers**: visualiser users, video viewers, review readers. Track conversion, order value and return rate.
4. **Close the loop.** Turn each month's top three return reasons into three content changes, then measure again.
5. **Track sellable recovery**, not just return rate. A return that can be resold is a very different cost to one that can't.

WITH CONTONA

See what works. Do more of it.

Usage and product level reporting shows which products shoppers try on or visualise most, and how those sessions perform, so you can prove the uplift and prioritise the next lines to roll out.

Usage reporting | Product level insight



YOUR 2027 CHECKLIST

Twenty moves to a friction free decision.

Print it, pin it, tick it off. You don't need all twenty by January. Start with the products that sell the most and come back the most.

Photography & video 01·02

- [ ] Minimum image set live on every hero product
- [ ] Context scenes matched to your top buyer personas
- [ ] Scale and variant imagery for every colourway
- [ ] Short, captioned video in gallery position two or three
- [ ] Top three customer questions answered on video

Visualise & return 03·04

- [ ] Try-on or room visualiser in the buy box
- [ ] High return, high value lines prioritised first
- [ ] Shopper renders reused in abandoned checkout flows
- [ ] Fewer, better timed follow ups that answer objections
- [ ] Discount held back as a final nudge, not an opener

Trust & clarity 05·06·07

- [ ] Top ten ads matched to their landing pages
- [ ] Reviews and photo reviews near the price
- [ ] Delivery, returns and warranty beside the button
- [ ] Dimensions visualised, colour accurate per variant
- [ ] Comparison table across each range

Discovery, speed & data 08·09·10

- [ ] Every product attribute filled, alt text on every image
- [ ] Consistent data across site, Merchant Center and marketplaces
- [ ] 2027 campaign calendar mapped and briefed in modules
- [ ] Return reason codes standardised, reviewed by SKU monthly
- [ ] Engaged vs non-engaged shoppers measured side by side

Tip Pick your ten best selling products and your ten most returned. Where they overlap is where to start.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

You've probably already got something in mind. Might as well make it.

Contona turns the products you already have into photography, video, personalised campaigns, virtual try-on and room visualisation. Connected to Shopify and Klaviyo. No shoot, no agency, no faff.

+25%
increase in conversions when shoppers see products in their own home

15%
fewer returns, with relevance built along the whole journey

90%
lower asset costs and faster campaign production



BOOK YOUR DEMO

Sarah Spratt

Customer Success Manager

See Contona working on your own products. Sarah will walk you through the tools that fit your store and help you spot the quick wins.

sarah@contona.ai · contona.ai/contact

Book a demo with Sarah

Prefer to dive in? **Start a 7-day free trial at contona.ai** · Plans from £47 a month · Cancel anytime

Sources. Salsify, 2026 Consumer Research (daily online shopping frequency, in store verification, channels reviewed before purchase). Salsify, Ecommerce Pulse Report Q4 2025 (AI shopping tool use). NIQ, Consumer Outlook: Guide to 2027 (quality and performance vs affordability). Capital One Shopping, 2026 (average ecommerce return rate). Akeno holiday returns survey, reported by SupplyChain247 (misleading product images). Digital Commerce 360 (returns due to photos or description). National Retail Federation (2025 US retail returns projection). Baymard Institute (basket abandonment average). Wunderkind UK and US consumer reports, 2026 (message preferences). Contona figures are drawn from Contona customer results and will vary by store, category and setup. This guide is general advice and not a guarantee of results.