Triage Partners Improving RL Cycle Time at The Edge of The Supply Chain
ARTICLE  Electronics Returns: Strategies for Improving Your Reverse Logistics Program
By Sean Magann, Global Vice President, Sims Recycling Solutions
In February 2019 (1), U.S. online sales surpassed brick-and-mortar sales for the first time. While online retailers had reason to celebrate, this growth comes with its own set of challenges, most notably customer returns.

ARTICLE  Challenges of Erasing Onboard Flash in Laptop Computers
By Aki Korhonen, PC-Doctor, Inc.
Modern laptops embrace embedded flash storage to achieve ever more ambitious form factor and cost goals. From a user’s perspective, there is usually little difference if storage is removable, but the implications to recycling and reuse of the device are significant.

ARTICLE  The Data is Wiped... Now What? Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Media Sanitization Process
By Mike Cheslock, E-Reuse Services, Inc.
Electronics asset recovery, reverse logistics and IT Asset Disposition professionals who perform electronic storage media sanitization (aka, “data wiping”) are trusted to effectively and completely eradicate data, thus protecting sensitive information from being compromised...

ARTICLE  R2v3 Improves Data Security for Reuse in Reverse Logistics
By Sean De Vries, R2 Director, Sustainable Electronics Recycling International
Technology is everywhere, and it seems to be continuously evolving at an ever-increasing rate. And as consumers are increasingly drawn to the faster speeds, enhanced functionality, and improved design of newer electronic devices, the rate of technology refresh is also on the rise.

ARTICLE  Recap and Highlights for RLA Conference & Expo 2020
By Cristina Lopez, Marketing Communications Manager, B-Stock
A recap provided by B-Stock Solutions on RLA Vegas 2020 including highlights and special events.

ARTICLE  My professional career learnings that give me CONFIDENCE to have a Seat at the Table
By Julie Ryan, Sr. Manager NA Returns & Remarketing, HP, Inc.
A summary of the 2nd RLA Women in Reverse Logistics luncheon. With special guest speaker, Julie Ryan of HP. Hosted and Sponsored by Sims Recycling Solutions.

COLUMN  Omnichannel Returns Strategy at the Customer Value Interface
View from Academia

COLUMN  Customer Service Improvement and Cost Reduction with 12N Codes
Right To Repair

COLUMN  Insights of Fighting for the Fix with Circular Club (CEC)

COLUMN  Circular Economy Interview

COLUMNS  Customer Service Improvement and Cost Reduction with 12N Codes

STANDARDS

The 17th Annual RLA Conference & Expo in Las Vegas kicked off Tuesday, February 4, 2020 with a collection of receptions and meet and greets (and golf!) in anticipation for the information-fueled event.

Wednesday’s agenda featured expert panels, ideas, networking, and an award ceremony (more on that later)—all based on the current state of reverse logistics, coined the cornerstone of the Circular Economy. As returns become more prominent, sustainability, social responsibility, and the secondary market are leading the charge for change.

We’re entering a state in which complexities meet opportunity and reverse logistics is driving the re-engineering of solutions—and as innovation leads the way, those who do not adapt may not survive. Sustainability is becoming more than a luxury—it is becoming the expectation. Companies have an opportunity to create value through social responsibility, with the future being framed by new and evolving consumer demands.

In understanding that the younger generations of consumers are dictating how the industry grows, panel members spoke about policies they are undertaking, including:

- Zero-landfill initiatives
- Ensuring that items are reusable from the design stage
- Harnessing the value of the secondary market

Experts from different industries discussed strategies and theories as to what the future may hold. And with a few of B-Stock’s own moderating and participating in panels, there was no shortage of presence: Paul Busch and Sean Cleland moderated and participated in panels discussing Cycle Time and Money and Making the Right Choices for Financial Success in Reverse Logistics, respectively.

As the event continued through Thursday, February 6th, here are a few more topics covered including sustainability, wireless and mobility, and cross-border returns:

**SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AFTERMARKET**

In this panel, the participants discussed different options for sustainability and how each of their companies are contributing to a greener future. Among these initiatives are Volume Reduction, by:

- Diverting more product to franchises
- Reselling damaged products to employees
- Educating customers with 360 imagery of products
- Developing packaging design that features education
- Leveraging the secondary market
How big is your returns problem?

- Sell directly to 100,000+ targeted business buyers in 130 countries
- Online auction platform creates competition, pushing prices up
- Sell any type of product, condition or quantity; from pallets to truckloads
- Used by the world’s largest retailers to recover more for returns and overstock
Another tactic included redefining what a product's life is: By selling into a secondary market, we take the product from “end of life” to “next life.” Another important part of this is challenging the status quo and setting KPIs that go beyond profits—understanding value can come from more than products sold. One such key metric is knowing and understanding WHAT your carbon footprint is, in order to properly tackle its reduction.

**WIRELESS AND MOBILITY**

As the technology market flattens, this creates a tremendous opportunity for the secondary market when it comes to recovery. National networks are evolving, creating new outlets for the devices. In addition, today's phones can be updated over and over again, which allows them to retain their value the second and even third time they're sold.

**Second Life is Just the Beginning**

Consumers are starting to see the value of trade ins and providers are now holding on to phones an average of 32 months, proving that devices retain quality past their model version. The worldwide market for used smartphones is expected to grow to 333 million devices with a resale market value of $67 billion by 2023, according to IDC.

**More Trust = More Opportunity**

Perceptions are changing when it comes to “used” and “refurbished” phones. Consumers today are saying “no” more and are thinking twice before buying new devices. In addition, there is more trust in the channel, which lends itself to these opportunities—harnessing the right data, tools, and collaboration opportunities ensure a higher level of integrity for devices than ever before. Having confidence in the supply chain means that you can trust the entire cycle, from the OEM to the retailer, to the warranty and repairs. And, refurbished products are now available in more and more reputable places.

**CROSS-BORDER RETURNS**

Global ecommerce is growing at a fast pace. Worldwide, consumers purchased $2.86 trillion in 2018, and the market is expected to grow to $4.9 trillion by 2021. Half of all cross-border consumers admit that having a wider range of product options is a key drive to purchasing internationally. But as they venture, they also have expectations:

- 79% won’t make purchases from a store that charges for shipping
- 72% expect a refund within five days of making a return
- 58% want a hassle-free return policy

As returns become more and more prominent, companies are consumers are shaping the way in which stores manage the process. The bulk of returns come from clothing and accessories (75%), followed by electronics (33%) and shoes (18%).

If one thing is for certain, returns cannot be ignored. And when you consider that every country has different laws and customs regulations, the cost of international returns can sometimes be higher than the original outbound cost. One thing is for sure—proper alignment and integration and finding creative transportation and outsourcing are key.

**RLA EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

One of the proudest segments of the week was the RLA Industry Awards, which recognized companies who have gone above and beyond in the reverse logistics space.

B-Stock won the Innovation Solution Partner Award, awarded to the company that provides the most effective and innovative solutions and tools for supporting reverse execution by demonstrating:
Measurable improvements in efficiency and return on investment for customers
• Support for RL best practices
• Seamless integration with customers’ technology infrastructure
• Elegant, user-centric design and innovative use of technology

D&S Global Solutions won the Operations Excellence Award, awarded to the company that demonstrates leadership in the effective execution of reverse logistics by showing:

• Clear RL strategy, goals and metrics in alignment with the corporate strategy
• Show measurable efficiencies gained through integration of technology, hardware and software solutions into RL operations
• Seamless and visible RL operations across functional and organizational boundaries
• Exceptional use of human capital, innovation, and continuous improvement

iQor won the Green Reverse Logistics Award, awarded to the company that demonstrates leadership in sustainable reverse logistics operations by demonstrating:

• Green RL initiatives that have resulted in measurable cost savings, business efficiencies and/or competitive advantage
• A closed-loop with product design, manufacturing, and procurement to build better products with less waste and eco-impact
• Public visibility of environmental impact regarding landfill, hazardous materials and carbon footprint as well as eco-impact goals that surpass mandated compliance levels

Lastly – Cell Phones for Soldiers was presented with a $7,000 check that was donated from their Tuesday evening TopGolf Charity event. Cell Phones for Soldiers is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing cost-free communication services and emergency funding to active-duty military members and veterans. An honorable charity, and an event we hope to see become an annual event during our Vegas Conference.

Congratulations to all who were recognized!

ABOUT AUTHOR

Cristina Lopez serves as B-Stock’s Marketing Communications Manager. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing the corporate blog as well as development and execution of the company’s communication objectives—including content marketing, thought leadership, company messaging, and branding. A proven communications strategist, Cristina brings an innovative approach to creating content that has helped companies achieve their B2B marketing objectives.