Wrong Item Request Handling

RugaOps

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Standard Operating Procedure

Purpose

To provide a consistent, efficient, and customer-focused process for resolving cases where a customer reports receiving an item different from what they ordered.

This procedure aims to:

- *Resolve customer issues quickly and accurately.*
- *Minimize customer effort.*
- *Prevent fraud and abuse.*
- *Maintain inventory and fulfillment accuracy.*
- *Protect customer satisfaction and retention.*

Scope

This SOP applies to all customer support agents handling inquiries related to:

- Incorrect product shipped.
- Incorrect size, color, or variant shipped.
- Incorrect quantity received.
- Completely different product received.
- Mixed-up orders.

This SOP applies to orders fulfilled by:

- Internal warehouse operations.
- Third-party logistics (3PL) providers.
- Dropshipping suppliers (if applicable).

Responsibilities

Suport Agents

- Respond within SLA.
- Verify order details.
- Collect required evidence.
- Determine appropriate resolution.
- Update customer records.
- Escalate when necessary.

Senior Support Agent / Team Lead

- Review exceptions and edge cases.
- Approve high-value replacements or refunds.
- Handle escalations.

Operations / Fulfillment Team

- Investigate fulfillment errors.
- Confirm inventory discrepancies.
- Implement corrective actions.

Operations Manager

- Monitor KPIs.
- Review trends.
- Approve policy exceptions.

Required Information from Customer

Before resolving the case, collect:

Mandatory

- Order number
- Customer email address
- Description of issue

Evidence Requested
Customer should provide:

1. *Photo of the item received.*
2. *Photo of packaging (if available).*
3. *Photo showing SKU/barcode label (if applicable).*
4. *Photo of packing slip (if included).*

Note: For low-value items, agents may skip photo requirements at their discretion if the claim appears credible.

Step-by-step procedure

Step 1: Acknowledge the Request

Respond within the team's SLA.

Example:

Thank you for contacting us. I'm sorry to hear you received the wrong item. I'll be happy to help resolve this. Could you please provide a photo of the item received along with your order number?

Ticket Status

- Open
- Waiting for Customer (if evidence requested).

Step 2: Verify Order Details

Review:

- Store order record
- Ordered SKU
- Ordered variant
- Fulfillment records
- Tracking information
- Previous support history

Confirm:

- What was ordered
- What was shipped
- Whether fulfillment notes indicate any substitutions

Step 3: Review Evidence

Compare:

CHECK	VERIFY
Product	*Correct item?*
Variant	*Correct size/color?*
Quantity	*Correct amount?*
Packaging	*Matching order label?*
SKU	*Matches shipped SKU?*

Determine whether the claim is:

- Valid
- Unclear
- Potentially fraudulent

Step 4: Determine Resolution

Scenario A: Wrong Item Confirmed

Resolution:

- *Ship correct item at no charge.*
- *Offer prepaid return label if return is required.*
- *Update customer on expected delivery timeline.*

Scenario B: Wrong Variant Received

Examples:

- *Wrong size*
- *Wrong color*
- *Wrong style*

Resolution:

- *Send correct variant.*
- *Arrange return if required.*

Scenario C: Low-Value Item

If item value is below the business's predefined threshold (example: $25):

Options:

- *Allow customer to keep incorrect item.*
- *Ship replacement immediately.*

Manager approval not required.

Scenario D: Inventory Error Prevents Replacement

If correct item is unavailable:

Offer:

1. *Full refund.*
2. *Store credit.*
3. *Alternative product of equal value.*

Customer selects preferred option.

Step 5: Create Resolution

Replacement

1. Create a replacement order in Store.
2. Mark as replacement.
3. Waive shipping charges.
4. Notify fulfilment team.

Refund

1. Process refund according to Refund SOP.
2. Record reason code:
    - Wrong Item Shipped

Store Credit

1. Generate credit according to company policy.
2. Notify customer of redemption process.

Step 6: Customer Communication

Send confirmation including:

- Resolution provided
- Tracking information (if applicable)
- Return instructions (if applicable)
- Expected timelines

Example:

We've arranged a replacement for the correct item at no additional cost. Your replacement order is now being processed and tracking details will be sent once shipped.

Step 7: Document the Case

Update ticket with:

- Root cause
- Resolution type
- Refund amount (if applicable)
- Replacement order number
- Evidence received
- Notes for fulfillment review

Close ticket after resolution is completed.

Decision Points

Decision Point 1

Is Evidence Required?

SITUATION	ACTION
Low-value order	*Agent discretion*
Clear fulfillment error	*May waive evidence*
High-value order	*Evidence required*
Repeat claimant	*Evidence required*

Decision Point 2

Is Return Required?

ITEM TYPE	RETURN REQUIRED
Low-value item	*Usually no*
High-value item	*Usually yes*
Customized item	*Manager review*
Hygiene-sensitive item	*Usually no*

Decision Point 3

Is Replacement Available?

AVAILABILITY	ACTION
In stock	*Replace*
Out of stock	*Refund, credit, or substitute*
Discontinued	*Refund or substitute*

Decision Point 4

Fraud Risk?

Indicators:

- Multiple similar claims.
- Conflicting evidence.
- Unusual account history.
- High-value orders with limited proof.

Action:

Escalate before issuing compensation.

Escalation Rules

Escalate to Team Lead or Manager when:

Financial Threshold

- *Refund exceeds predefined limit (e.g., $100).*
- *Replacement value exceeds predefined limit.*

Fraud Concerns

- *Repeat wrong-item claims.*
- *Suspicious customer behavior.*
- *Evidence does not support claim.*

Operational Issues

- *Repeated warehouse errors.*
- *Multiple customers affected by same SKU.*
- *Inventory discrepancies discovered.*

Customer Experience Risk

- *VIP customers.*
- *Influencers/partners.*
- *Public complaints or social media escalation.*

Policy Exceptions

Examples:

- *Claim submitted outside reporting window*
- *Customer requests compensation beyond policy*

Exceptions

The following situations may require case-by-case review:

No Evidence Available

Agent may resolve without photos when:

- Customer has strong purchase history.
- Item value is low.
- Error is highly likely based on fulfillment records.

Document rationale.

International Orders

Consider:

- Return shipping costs.
- Customs fees.
- Delivery timelines.

In many cases, replacement without return is more cost-effective.

Customized or Personalized Products

Require manager review before:

- Refunds
- Replacements
- Exceptions

Marketplace Orders

If order originated from a marketplace, follow marketplace-specific policies and deadlines in addition to this SOP.

KPI Considerations

Track the following metrics monthly:

Customer Service KPIs

- First Response Time (FRT)
- Average Resolution Time (ART)
- Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)
- Customer Effort Score (CES)

Quality KPIs

- Wrong Item Resolution Rate
- First Contact Resolution (FCR)
- Reopen Rate
- Escalation Rate

Operational KPIs

- Wrong Item Claims per 1,000 Orders
- Fulfillment Error Rate
- Replacement Cost
- Refund Cost
- Return Label Cost

Fraud Monitoring KPIs

- Repeat Claim Rate
- Claims Requiring Investigation
- Fraudulent Claim Rate

Success Criteria

A "Wrong Item Received" case is considered successfully resolved when:

- The customer receives the agreed resolution (replacement, refund, or credit).
- All case notes are documented.
- Root cause is categorized.
- Required escalations are completed.
- Customer communication is completed.
- Ticket is closed according to SLA.

Target Operational Goal:

Resolve at least 90% of valid wrong-item claims within 2 business days and maintain a CSAT score of 90% or higher for these cases.

Additional Steps

Verify Internal Fulfillment Error Before Replacing

Check warehouse pick logs, fulfillment photos (if available), packer ID, and inventory movement history to confirm whether the wrong item was shipped.

This helps distinguish:

- Warehouse error
- Customer ordering error
- Product labeling error
- Supplier error

Check for Existing Open Claims

Before issuing a replacement:

- Search customer history.
- Check prior wrong-item claims.
- Review open tickets and chargebacks.

This reduces duplicate compensation.

Return Label Decision Process

Without guidance, agents may make inconsistent decisions.

ITEM VALUE	RETURN REQUIRED
Under $20	*No*
$20-$100	*Case-by-case*
Over $100	*Usually yes*

Root Cause Classification

Require agents to select one reason code:

- Wrong SKU picked
- Wrong SKU labeled
- Inventory mismatch
- Supplier packing error
- Product listing error
- Customer misunderstanding
- Fraudulent claim
- Unknown

This is critical for operational improvement.

Follow-Up Verification

After replacement ships:

- Send tracking.
- Confirm delivery.
- Close loop after 7–14 days.

Many stores miss this step and lose CSAT opportunities.

Operations Feedback Loop

Add:

If the same SKU generates 3+ wrong-item complaints within 30 days, create an operations review ticket.

This prevents recurring errors.

Operational Risks

Risk 1: Fraudulent Claims

The largest risk.

Examples:

- Customer receives correct item but claims otherwise.
- Customer reuses photos from previous orders.
- Customer keeps both original and replacement.

Mitigation:

- Require photos for higher-value orders.
- Review account history.

Risk 2: Double Compensation

Example:

- Replacement shipped.
- Customer later requests refund.
- Agent unaware of prior resolution.

Mitigation:

- Standardised ticket tags.
- Resolution tracking fields.

Risk 3: Inventory Shrinkage

If replacements are sent without return requirements:

- Inventory losses increase.
- Shrinkage becomes hidden.

Track:

- Replacement units sent
- Units recovered

Risk 4: Inconsistent Agent Decisions

A 1–5 person team can quickly develop different standards.
Examples:

- Agent A refunds.
- Agent B replaces.
- Agent C offers store credit.

Customers notice inconsistencies.

Mitigation:

- Decision matrix.
- Approval thresholds.

Risk 5: Supplier or 3PL Errors Going Undetected

Without root-cause tracking:

- Same warehouse issue continues.
- Same supplier mistake repeats.

6. Chargeback Risk

If resolution is slow:

Customer path often becomes:

Wrong item → Wait for response → Frustration → Chargeback

Consider prioritizing wrong-item tickets.

Common Customer Complaints

These occur frequently in ecommerce.

"Why do I have to send photos?"

Customers often feel:

I already told you it's wrong.

Recommendation:

Explain that photos help expedite replacement and improve warehouse accuracy.

"I shouldn't have to return your mistake."

Very common.

- Item value is low.
- Return process is inconvenient.

Have a clear return-value threshold.

"I need the correct item urgently."

Common when item is:

- Gift
- Event-related
- Seasonal purchase

Offer expedited replacement criteria.

"Tracking says delivered but I still have the wrong item."

Customers often confuse:

- Wrong item
- Missing item
- Partial shipment

Agents need a triage step.

"You sent the wrong color/size again."

This often signals:

- Inventory mapping issues
- Store variant issues
- Warehouse labeling errors

These cases should be escalated immediately.

"I paid customs already."

International customers may complain about:

- Paying duties twice
- Import taxes on replacement shipments

Add guidance for international replacements.

Opportunities for Automation

For a 1–5 person support team, automation can eliminate 30–50% of manual work.

1. Automated Wrong-Item Intake Form

Instead of email back-and-forth:

Customer submits:

- Order number
- Photos
- Description
- Received SKU

Benefits:

- Faster resolution
- Better evidence collection

2. Auto-Tag Tickets

Automatically apply tags:

- Wrong Item
- Wrong Variant
- Wrong Quantity
- High Value Claim

This improves reporting.

3. Auto-Create Replacement Draft Orders

Once approved:

- Generate replacement order automatically.
- Notify fulfillment team.

Reduces manual work.

4. Claim Frequency Alerts

Trigger alert if:

- Customer submits multiple claims.
- SKU exceeds complaint threshold.

Useful for fraud and operations monitoring.

5. Automated Customer Updates

Send automatic emails:

- Claim received
- Replacement approved
- Return label issued
- Replacement shipped
- Resolution completed

Reduces "Where is my replacement?" tickets.

6. Warehouse Error Dashboard

Track:

- Wrong-item claims by SKU
- Claims by picker
- Claims by warehouse
- Claims by supplier

Even simple Google Sheets reporting works.

7. AI-Assisted Ticket Classification

Small teams can automate detection of:

- Wrong item
- Damaged item
- Missing item
- Return request

Before an agent even opens the ticket.

FAQ Articles

Good FAQ content can prevent tickets or speed resolution.

"I Received the Wrong Item"

We're sorry you received an incorrect item. We understand how frustrating that can be, and we'll work to resolve it as quickly as possible.

What should I do?

Please contact our support team and provide:

- Your order number
- A photo of the item you received
- A photo of the shipping label (if available)
- A photo of the packing slip (if included)

Providing photos helps us verify the issue and speed up the resolution process.

What resolutions are available?

Depending on the situation, we may offer:

- A replacement of the correct item
- A refund
- Store credit
- An alternative product if the original item is unavailable

Do I need to return the incorrect item?

Not always.

For lower-value items, we may allow you to keep the item and send a replacement. For higher-value items, we may request that the incorrect item be returned before a replacement or refund is issued.

If a return is required due to our error, we will provide return instructions.

How long does it take to resolve?

Most verified wrong-item claims are reviewed within 1 business day and resolved within 2 business days.

Replacement shipping times depend on the shipping method selected and your location.

Why do you ask for photos?

Photos help us:

- Verify the item received
- Identify warehouse or packing errors
- Prevent delays
- Improve future order accuracy

What if the correct item is out of stock?

If the item is unavailable, we may offer:

- A full refund
- Store credit
- A comparable alternative product

Our support team will discuss available options with you.

Wrong Item Received Checklist

CUSTOMER INFORMATION	DONE
Order number verified	✓
Customer email matches order	
Delivery status confirmed	

EVIDENCE COLLECTION	DONE
Photo of received item obtained	✓
Photo of packing slip obtained (if available)	
Photo of shipping label obtained	
Evidence reviewed	

STORE VERIFICATION	DONE
Ordered SKU verified	✓
Ordered variant verified	
Fulfilled SKU reviewed	
Tracking reviewed	
Order notes reviewed	

CUSTOMER HISTORY REVIEW	DONE
Previous wrong-item claims checked	✓
Refund history checked	
Chargeback history checked	

ROOT CAUSE CLASSIFICATION	DONE
Wrong SKU picked	✓
Wrong variant picked	
Inventory mapping issue	
Supplier error	
Labeling error	
Customer misunderstanding	
Fraud concern	
Unknown	

RESOLUTION	DONE
Replacement approved	✓
Refund approved	
Store credit approved	
Return required	
Returnless resolution	

DOCUMENTATION	DONE
Order tagged	✓
Ticket categorized	
Internal notes added	
Resolution cost recorded	
Ticket closed	

Ticket Category Structure

Primary Category: Order Issues

Secondary Category: Wrong Item Received

Subcategories

CODE	SUBCATEGORY
WI-01	*Completely Wrong Item*
WI-02	*Wrong Size*
WI-03	*Wrong Color*
WI-04	*Wrong Variant*
WI-05	Wrong Quantity
WI-06	*Bundle Item Missing/Wrong*
WI-07	*Supplier Fulfillment Error*
WI-08	*Inventory Mapping Error*
WI-09	*Repeat Wrong Item Issue*
WI-10	*Fraud Review Required*

Resolution Codes

CODE	RESOLUTION
RES-REP	*Replacement Sent*
RES-REF	Refund Issued
RES-SC	*Store Credit*
RES-RET	*Return Required*
RES-RL	Returnless Resolution

Root Cause Codes

CODE	ROOT CAUSE
RC-01	*Wrong SKU Picked*
RC-02	Wrong Variant Picked
RC-03	*Labeling Error*
RC-04	*Inventory Mapping Error*
RC-05	Supplier Error
RC-06	Customer Error
RC-07	Fraudulent Claim
RC-99	Unknown

Escalation Matrix

SCENARIO	AGENT	SENIOR AGENT	MANAGER
Replacement under $50	*Approve*	Approve	Approve
Refund under $50	*Approve*	*Approve*	*Approve*
Refund $50-$200	*Escalate*	*Approve*	*Approve*
Refund over $200	*Escalate*	*Escalate*	*Approve*
High-value order (>$100)	*Escalate*	*Review*	*Approve*
Multiple prior claims	*Escalate*	Review	*Approve*
Fraud concern	*Escalate*	*Review*	*Approve*
VIP customer	*Notify*	*Review*	*Approve*
Same SKU ≥5 claims/month	*Notify Ops*	*Review*	*Launch investigation*
Supplier recurring issue	*Notify Ops*	*Review*	*Launch investigation*
Policy exception	*Escalate*	*Escalate*	*Approve*

Automatic Escalation Triggers

- *Customer has 2+ wrong-item claims in 6 months*
- *Order value exceeds $100*
- *Refund exceeds $50*
- *Evidence is missing or conflicting*
- *Social media complaint*
- *Chargeback threat*
- *Legal complaint*

Improvements

A support operations manager would look beyond ticket handling and focus on scalability, consistency, cost control, reporting, and prevention.

1. Add a Formal Triage Framework

CATEGORY	PRIORITY
Wrong item received	Standard
Wrong variant received	Standard
High-value order	High
VIP customer	High
High-value item damaged	Escalate
Repeat claimant	Review Required
International order	Special Handling

This prevents agents from spending equal effort on a $10 error and a $500 error.

2. Create a Resolution Matrix

A support operations manager wants predictable outcomes.

Example

ORDER VALUE	EVIDENCE	RESOLUTION
<$25	Optional	Replace immediately
$25-$100	Required	Replace after verification
>$100	Required	Return required before replacement unless approved

This reduces inconsistency between agents.

3. Introduce SLA Targets

Example:

METRIC	TARGET
First response	< 4 business hours
Evidence review	< 1 business day
Resolution decision	< 1 business day
Replacement creation	Same day
Total resolution time	< 2 business days

Without SLAs, performance cannot be managed.

4. Add Fraud Prevention Controls

Most small stores underestimate this.

Add a section:

Fraud Indicators

- Multiple claims within 6 months
- High-value order
- Refusal to provide photos
- Inconsistent photos
- Previous chargebacks
- Multiple accounts using same address

Action

Route to manager review.
This protects margins.

5. Add Root Cause Tracking Requirements

This is probably the biggest missing operational element.

Every ticket should be coded.

Required fields:

- Error type
- Warehouse
- Fulfillment partner
- SKU affected
- Resolution type
- Cost incurred

Without coding, you cannot improve fulfillment quality.

6. Track Cost of Quality

Most SOPs focus on customer satisfaction only.

Operations leaders track cost.

For every case record:

- Replacement item cost
- Shipping cost
- Return label cost
- Refund amount
- Labor estimate

Monthly reporting should include:

- Total Wrong Item Cost

This often reveals bigger fulfillment problems.

7. Add Recurring-Issue Detection

Operations should identify trends.

Example triggers:

SKU Trigger
5 wrong-item claims in 30 days.

Warehouse Trigger
3 claims tied to same picker.

Supplier Trigger
3 claims tied to same supplier.

Automatic investigation should follow.

8. Define Approval Levels

A mature SOP defines authority.

ACTION	AGENT	LEAD	MANAGER
Replacement <$50	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refund <$50	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refund $50-$200	No	Yes	Yes
Refund >$200	No	No	Yes
Policy exception	No	No	Yes

This prevents over-compensation.

9. Add Customer Communication Templates

Support operations leaders hate inconsistent messaging.

Include templates for:

- Evidence request
- Replacement approved
- Refund approved
- Return instructions
- Out-of-stock resolution
- Escalation notice

Benefits:

- Faster handling
- Consistent tone
- Better CSAT

14. Add Customer Experience Recovery Rules

Wrong-item tickets often create loyalty opportunities.

Example:

SITUATION	RECOVERY ACTION
First mistake	Apology
Delayed replacement	Small coupon
Repeat company error	Coupon or upgrade
VIP customer	Expedited shipping

This creates consistency around goodwill gestures.

15. Create an Executive Reporting Section

A support operations manager wants visibility.

Monthly dashboard:

- Wrong-item rate (% of orders)
- Claims per 1,000 orders
- Resolution time
- Replacement cost
- Refund cost
- Returnless resolution rate
- Fraud rate
- Top 10 affected SKUs
- Top root causes

These metrics help identify whether the issue is a support problem, warehouse problem, supplier problem, or product catalog problem.



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