

Building circularity-as-a service and making second hand tech cool

The demand for refurbished devices is skyrocketing and recommerce is essential, given the expected rise in e-waste to 82 million tonnes annually by 2030. This shift is no longer niche - it's mainstream. But to fully realise this potential, retailers must rethink their approach to circularity. It's about more than just offering trade-in programs; it's about aligning every aspect of the business - from supply chains to customer service - around the principles of a circular economy.

Temps de lecture : minute

27 August 2024

If just 50% of Brits switched to refurbished devices in 2024, it could save 63,750,000 kg of carbon emissions. This isn't just about offering high-quality second-hand products; it's about reducing e-waste and extending the lifespan of devices.

The growing demand for refurbished tech

The pandemic accelerated the shift towards second-hand products, particularly among younger consumers like Gen Z, and according to McKinsey's 2021 research, over 60% of Gen Z sought used products before buying new. To add, recommerce is growing 16 times faster than traditional retail, and there's a significant shift in consumer behaviour towards more sustainable and affordable purchasing options.

Enders Analysis also reports weakening handset sales in the UK as

consumers hold onto their phones longer due to affordability issues and longer contracts.

As conscious consumerism grows, with increasing focus on environmental impact and affordability, Matt (my Co-founder) and I recognised the importance of helping retailers and brands scale their recommerce programs.

Second hand tech, the new new

As the cost of living rises and consumers shift towards more sustainable shopping habits, value-focused shoppers are increasingly choosing circular electronics as their mainstream option. Gone are the days when purchasing second-hand electronics meant navigating through dusty car boot sales or endless listings on eBay.

Today, recommerce provides sleek digital platforms and elevated in-person experiences, delivering exceptional customer service while minimising environmental impact. GfK UK's Tech360 survey revealed that in 2023, a quarter of all mobile phones sold in the UK were second-hand or refurbished, up from 19% in 2021.

The recommerce Revolution

Businesses in other sectors have also recognised the importance of recommerce.

In 2022, brands like Rolex, Peloton, and Lululemon also adopted this sustainable model, and platforms like Poshmark and Backmarket are expanding. The RealReal, a luxury consignment platform, raised \$300M in its IPO, reflecting strong investor confidence in resale. Recommerce is now a commercial necessity, especially in the electronics industry.

The rise of recommerce is not only an environmental necessity but also a

commercial need for retailers. As consumers increasingly opt for second-hand tech, recommerce offers a sustainable and profitable path forward to cover the losses on the move away from new.

At Reboxed, we've leveraged this trend.

Initially, we started the business as a direct-to-consumer platform, offering consumers access to the latest tech without the new price tag. We've since expanded into a B2B platform, providing brands and retailers with a reliable way to offer their customers quality second-hand tech and trade in programmes through our software and supply chain. All whilst boosting both revenue and sustainability. By integrating technology, supply chain, and brand expertise to deliver 'Circularity as a Service™' we help retailers implement resale, trade-in, and recycling programs efficiently.

Retailers need to rethink their approach to circularity

Bridging consumer demand with retailer innovation, accelerating the shift to a circular economy, I'm on a mission to rehome 100 million devices. Retailers need to rethink their approach to circularity, aligning their operations with circular economy principles and helping rehome millions of returns too, which could be revenue.

We call it Circularity as a Service™, and it's an approach that helps businesses seamlessly integrate recommerce into their core, driving customer lifetime value, loyalty, and revenue while saving up to 50% on devices and cutting environmental impact.

When executed well, these programmes can enhance commercial success and reduce carbon footprints, benefiting both businesses and the planet. We envision a future where circularity is a core strategy for every

business.

Together, we can make second-hand tech the first choice for all.

Phil Kemsih is the CEO and Founder of Reboxed, a Circular economy startup who recently announced the launch of ReboxedOS®, an out-the-box solution for consumer electronics recommerce.



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