Make Sizing Your Superpower:
The Smart Brand's Guide to Fit, Loyalty & Growth

CONTENT:

- Why Getting Sizing Right is the Smartest Business Decision a Fashion Brand Can Make

- Reducing Returns and Getting the Fit Right: Fashion's Most Overlooked Growth and Sustainability Strategy

- Fashion ecommerce stores are still giving size recommendations like it's the early 20th century - then wonder why their return rates are 10 - 60%

.

- 4 Reasons the Current Sizing System Doesn't Work

- Millions spent on marketing to attract customers - only to send them the wrong size

- Traditional marketing just doesn't work for the fashion industry.

- Sizing & Sustainability - Your Fabric Is Organic - But Your Fit & Sizing Strategy Is Wasteful

- What makes the right size feel right?

- 6 Things Every Fashion Brand Should Master to Achieve Great Fit

- How to create accurate size charts?

- How to Create an Accurate General Size Guide for Your Fashion Brand

SizeSense

CONTENT:

- How to Create Accurate Product-Specific Size Charts?

- Tech stack and Size Recommendation tools.

- Get my 10 proven strategies that helped me reduce return rates for my fashion brand with 66%

Why Getting Sizing Right is the Smartest Business Decision a Fashion Brand Can Make

According to AfterShip, returns are a staggering **$218 billion problem each year for the global fashion ecommerce..**

The cost of processing each return can range from 20% to 65% of the item's original value, depending on factors such as shipping, restocking, and potential loss of resale value.

Here's what the numbers reveal:
- 52% of fashion e-commerce orders are returned, primarily due to poor fit.
- 25% of those returned items never make it back to stock - they go straight to landfills or liquidation.
- Every return generates approximately 0.5 kg of CO_2 emissions through transport, warehousing, and repackaging.
- Customers are 80% less likely to return after a positive fit experience. And 1 in 5 will never shop again after a poor one.

And yet… sizing is still neglected.

In an industry under increasing pressure to reduce waste, deliver better experiences, and increase repeat purchases, can brands really afford to keep gambling on fit?

Reducing Returns and Getting the Fit Right: Fashion's Most Overlooked Growth and Sustainability Strategy

Fashion brands are racing to adopt AI tools to create more personalized customer experiences - from tailored product recommendations to engaging content.

But what kind of personalized experience are you really offering if you can't get the size right?

You build trust, curate products your customer might love, and guide them through a seamless journey - only for it to end in a return because the fit was wrong.

All that effort, only to lose their confidence at the final step. Personalization without accurate sizing isn't personalization - it's an expensive illusion.

The truth is, sizing is the most personal part of the shopping experience. It's what determines how a garment actually feels when worn — whether it empowers your customer or makes them feel uncomfortable. Every return caused by poor fit isn't just a financial loss, it's a broken promise. And with returns contributing heavily to fashion's environmental impact, ignoring this part of the customer journey undermines both growth and sustainability goals.

Fashion ecommerce stores are still giving size recommendations like it's the early 20th century - then wonder why their return rates are 10 - 60%.

"In the past, sizing charts were developed to reflect grouping of young women and mature women. Early in the 20th century, firms that were producing garments for catalog sale needed to have consistency in the measurements of their products so that consumers could purchase garment without trying them on. This need precipitated some of the first American sizing charts. The original charts became inadequate as more and more garments were produced for an increasingly diverse population of customers. Although some attempts were made to standardize sizing in the U.S, the Federal Trade Commission and the Bureau of Standards of the Department of Commerce could only recommend measurements that were in common use in the business.(...) Available tables serve only as voluntary guidelines for product development ... " Keiser Garner - Beyond Design - "The Synergy of Apparel Product Development" (2008)

Nearly a century ago, it was already clear that size charts alone can't help customers find the right fit when shopping from catalog and without trying the clothes on.

If you're still relying on size charts today for your fashion ecommerce stores, you're using a method that's been failing for decades.

And instead of fixing the root of the problem, the industry just shrugs and says, "Returns are the cost of shopping online."

4 Reasons the Current Sizing System Doesn't Work

SizeSense

REASON 1 - THE ROOT CAUSE FOR ILL-FITTING CLOTHING

The root cause of many ill-fitting clothing and sizing issues is the industry misconception that the hourglass figure is the dominant body shape..**But here's the truth:**

Only 8.4% of women have an hourglass shape

46.12% are rectangular

20.92% are pear-shaped

13.83% are inverted triangle

10.73% are apple-shaped

(according to Keiser Garner - Beyond Design - "The Synergy of Apparel Product Development" (2008))

When your chart is built for just 8% of your audience, the rest fall between sizes.

For example: a woman with a rectangular body shape have a wider waist than your size guide expects — and suddenly, she's stuck between two sizes.

And when that happens?

Customers with different body types often fall between multiple size ranges, which leads them to either abandon their purchase altogether or order 2–3 sizes of the same item just to figure out which one fits - and return the rest.

REASON 2 - SIZE INCONSISTENCY

Brands are often ashamed to admit size inconsistency - even within their own collections. But the truth is, size inconsistency is inevitable. If anyone believes that sizing can be fully standardized across all clothing, they're setting themselves up for failure.

Why? Because every fabric, fit, and design behaves differently. Expecting one rigid size system to work across all styles simply ignores how clothing is actually made - and how real bodies move. Why size inconsistency happens?

#1: Product Development and Manufacturing Obstacles

After years in manufacturing and ateliers - as a seamstress, product developer, brand owner, designer, and pattern maker - I can confirm this is a common issue. If you've held any of these roles, you'll likely agree.

During product development and production, keeping measurements true to tech specs is tough. Mistakes in pattern making, faulty samples, fabric shrinkage, and seam allowance variations can all affect the final fit. Even when brands and manufacturers follow size guides, the end product may not match the chart.

#2: Fabric elasticity

Two identical garments made from the same pattern can fit completely differently - just because the fabric elasticity changes.

A fabric with more stretch may make the garment feel looser, while a less elastic version can feel tight - even though the size and pattern are exactly the same.

That's why customers often think,

"Wait, this is my usual size... why doesn't it fit?"
It's not always the sizing that's wrong. It's how the fabric behaves that changes the fit experience.

The magic of well-fitted clothing comes from carefully balancing design, ease allowances, and fabric elasticity. When that process is skipped, you end up with two pairs of pants - same design, different sizes.

REASON 3: THE MYTH "TRUE TO SIZE"?

Why "True to Size" Is a Myth

How many times have you seen a brand say, "This style runs true to size"? It sounds reassuring - but in reality, it often creates more confusion than clarity.

Here's why:

👉 Fit isn't just about measurements.
It's about fabric. Body shape. Elasticity. Style. Personal preference. It's emotional as much as it is technical or just a simple mathematical calculation.

Let me tell you a simple story:

Two women.
Same bust, waist, and hip measurements.

Woman A loves tailored, fitted clothing. She wants her blazer to fit perfectly at the waist.

Woman B prefers a loose, relaxed fit. She wants her clothes to move with her, not cling to her.

Same body. Different sizing needs.

If both women buy the same "true to size" jacket, only one will be happy.

The other will feel disappointed - not because the sizing was wrong, but because the fit didn't match her expectations.

This is why "true to size" is a myth. True to whose wear preferences?

To define the right size:

✅ It's not enough to match body measurements to garment measurements.
✅We have to consider fabric elasticity, garment construction, and individual fit preferences too.
✅ Smart brands are moving beyond one-size-fits-all sizing advice and offering more personalized size recommendations - because real fit is personal.

REASON 4: STILL BELIEVE IN STANDARDIZATION

Why Standardization in Sizing Isn't Possible

I often hear people say there should be standardization in sizing - but here's why that's not realistic.

One of the hardest algorithms for our size recommendation tool I had to create was for jeans and pants.

Why?

As I already said - sizing isn't just science - it's deeply connected to fabric elasticity and customer wear preferences.

The other will feel disappointed - not because the sizing was wrong, but because the fit didn't match her expectations.

During my research about sizing and fit, I ran two types of tests:

I measured women's existing low-waist, mid-waist, and high-waist jeans and pants including fabric elasticity, along with their body measurements.

I visited shopping malls with friends and coworkers, asking them to try on different sizes of the same style of jeans — again measuring their body and the garments, including fabric elasticity.

Here's what I discovered:

➡️ 30% of women intentionally chose jeans that were tighter than their actual size. For some, I couldn't imagine how they could sit comfortably all day in those ultra-fitted jeans - yet they preferred that skin-tight feel.

➡️ Women with pear-shaped bodies often favored jeans with high elasticity to achieve a snug waist fit while still accommodating their hips.

The same goes for apple and rectangle body shapes.
They often rely on fabric elasticity to get a better fit.
They need jeans that can comfortably stretch around a fuller waist, while still fitting snugly around narrower hips.

So, how can we assign a "true" size to a garment when:

💡 Fabric elasticity drastically changes how it fits. More elastic fabrics can feel looser, even if the size technically matches the customer's measurements.

💡 Personal preference plays a huge role. Some customers prefer a snug fit, while others choose looser styles. If a garment runs slightly bigger and the customer prefers a tight fit, they're likely to return it.

💡 Size stigma influences choices. Many women feel pressured to wear smaller sizes and will intentionally squeeze into overly tight, elastic clothing to avoid going up a size.

SizeSense

This is why accurate size recommendation tools are crucial. They don't just match numbers; they consider elasticity, body shape, and wear preferences - the key factors that make one size feel "just right.

SizeSense

Millions spent on marketing to attract customers - only to send them the wrong size

In today's ecommerce world, it's not trends or price that drive conversions.

It's the personal connection. Trust. Fit.

The Business of Fashion recently said that shoppers are less influenced by fashion trends or promotions - and more by how personal the experience feels.

Especially when it comes to sizing.

People are cautious.

They're calculating delivery fees, return costs, and whether the product will even fit.

And if it doesn't? Many won't bother sending it back.

They'll give it away, donate it, or throw it in a recycling bin.

👉 So when return rates look low, don't assume it's because your fit is great.

Customers just don't want to waste their time.

You'll see it in:

- High customer acquisition costs

- Low retention

- Low average order value

- And a silent funnel leak no ad campaign can fix.

Because if the product doesn't fit the first time, 80% of customers won't come back.

So you're burning budget bringing people to your store - but without accurate size recommendations, you're losing them just as fast.

Traditional marketing just doesn't work for the fashion industry.

You're building personas like:

"Meet Elena, 42, busy mom of two, part-time architect.
Lives in a suburb near Barcelona. Loves minimalist, timeless fashion with high-quality fabrics."

Great. But what if Elena wants to buy from you - and can't?

She's apple-shaped. Her waist is the widest part of her body.

But your size chart assumes it's the smallest.

She's tried ordering before. Nothing fit. She gave up.

This approach is fundamentally broken.

Why? Because you're designing for imaginary people instead of actual users.

SizeSense

You don't actually know the body measurements of the people visiting your fashion eCommerce store. So how can you expect your size chart to work for them?

You're building without knowing your customers' real measurements or body shapes.

You're designing blind.

Without this data, your entire product and marketing strategy is built on guesswork.

Your target audience isn't who you think they are.

If you're a marketer working in fashion, defining your audience by interests, age, and lifestyle isn't enough. You need to factor in body measurements and body types too.

That's how you build a realistic, profitable, and sustainable audience.

One that actually fits your product, loves it, keeps it, and wears it for years.

Fashion was meant to be a reflection of mastery…

But somewhere along the way, we lost the connection.

Brands promise craftsmanship, authenticity, and timeless design. But when the sizing feels off and the quality slips, the dream starts to fracture.

A customer returns a pair of trousers because the fit just felt wrong.
- Marketing logs the return.
- Customer support tags it "wrong size."
- And that's where the story ends.

In many fashion brands, marketing, product development, and manufacturing still operate in silos.

Yet when poor fit leads to returns, bad reviews, and lost trust
…it's not just a marketing problem.
…it's not just a product issue.
It's a broken system.

Here's why closing the loop is no longer optional:

- Fit is a product decision - but also a marketing promise.
If your product page says "designed for curves," that's a brand promise. When it fails, it's marketing that pays the price.

- Returns data isn't noise - it's insight. A spike in returns for a particular size or fabric isn't just bad luck. It's a signal. One that patternmakers, product developers, and even sourcing teams need to see.

- Every return is a missed opportunity - if you don't learn from it. Are we describing fit accurately on product pages? Do we give enough information about product measurements, help customers find their size fast?

Here's how we fix the disconnect:

✅ Hold cross-functional fit review sessions.
✅ Feed return reasons and size complaints upstream - every month.
✅ Use sizing analytics and recommendation tools that connect UX data with garment specs.
✅ Invite product teams into marketing meetings (and vice versa).

Because when brands work together across departments, fit gets better.
Returns go down.
And loyalty goes up.

SizeSense

SIZING & SUSTAINABILITY

Your Fabric Is Organic - But Your Fit & Sizing Strategy Is Wasteful

You're using organic cotton.
You've switched to compostable packaging.
You even added "sustainable" to your bio.

But if your customers are still:
- Returning clothes due to wrong size
- Ordering multiple sizes "just in case"
- Driving up carbon emissions through reverse logistics...

Then no - your business model isn't sustainable.
It's just better-wrapped waste.

Because sustainability isn't just fabric.
It's fit. forecasting. and responsibility.

True sustainability looks like:
- Designing fewer pieces that actually fit
- Using data to reduce returns & overproduction
- Knowing what sizes your audience needs - and not guessing, especially when you sell internationally
- Educating shoppers on how to choose right size - the first time

So if you're still:
- Dropping new collections monthly
- Competing with discounts
- Treating returns like "just part of the process"...

Then your organic fabric won't save you.
But your strategy can.

✅ Start by fixing the root cause: bad sizing = high returns = avoidable waste.

Because:

When Fit Fails, the Planet Pays.

I once asked a friend why she returned 26 out of 27 items from a recent online order.

Her answer was simple: "None of them fit."

She wasn't trying to be wasteful. She just wanted something that worked for her body.

But here's the hidden cost:
- Every return means more transportation emissions.
- More packaging wasted.
- More clothes that may never be resold - ending up in landfills or incinerators.

We talk about sustainable fabrics and carbon offsets - but ignore one of the fashion industry's biggest problems:

❌ Fit failure is a sustainability issue.
❌ And most brands don't even realize it.

When sizing charts don't reflect real body data…
When size recommendation ignore fabric elasticity…
When returns are logged but not learned from…

SizeSense

Fashion brands don't just lose revenue - they lose customer trust and environmental credibility.

Clothes that fit right stay longer in our wardrobes.

Do you have clothes with faded fabric that aren't trendy anymore, but every time you wear them, they feel incredibly comfortable - like the most comforting thing ever?

To feel clothing like a second skin.
To feel comfort - like being back home.
To feel it as a shield around you.

Isn't that what we all seek in this uncomfortable world? To at least feel comfortable in our clothes.

Because the most sustainable clothes are the ones that don't end up in the recycling bin - but stay with us, loved and worn for years.

Helping your customers find the right fit means helping your clothing stay longer in their wardrobes.

SizeSense

What makes the right size feel right?

Back when we started surveying real women about sizing and fit... we had a theory:

Most returns weren't about quality, price, or even style.
They were about fit and sizing. So we dug deeper to understand what makes the right size actually right - and we discovered three critical factors that makes the right size feel right:

✨ Clothing fit
✨ Customer wear preferences
✨ Fabric elasticity

So here are:

6 Things Every Fashion Brand Should Master to Achieve Great Fit

A truly great fit is the result of:
✔️ Precise design
✔️ Smart patternmaking
✔️ The right fabric choices
✔️ Attention to detail throughout the process

Here are 6 things every brand must get right to deliver that flawless fit your customers will rave about:

🔹 **1. Adequate Ease**
Ease = the difference between your customer's body measurements and the garment's actual measurements.
There are two types:
– Functional ease (for movement)
– Design ease (for style)

If you often hear "everything runs small," check the ease. It's one of the most common - and fixable - mistakes in fit.

◆ 2. Fabric Elasticity
Elasticity is the quiet hero of fit.
Using the same pattern for a rigid fabric and a stretchy one? That's a mistake. Elasticity must be factored into your sizing and ease decisions - otherwise, the same design will feel totally different depending on the fabric.

◆ 3. Set (a smooth, wrinkle-free fit)
Wrinkles and drag lines = red flags.
They often signal that a garment is too tight or too loose in a specific area. These issues should be caught in the sampling stage - not after launch.

◆ 4. Line (how the garment hangs)
Lines like side seams, center front, and center back should fall straight and perpendicular to the floor. This should always be checked in quality control - it's what separates a garment that fits okay from one that fits beautifully.

◆ 5. Grain
In the fashion industry, grain refers to the direction of the threads in a woven fabric. It's crucial in garment construction because it affects how the fabric behaves, drapes, and stretches.

There are three types of grain:
- Lengthwise Grain (Warp) – Runs parallel to the selvage (the factory-finished edge). It's the most stable and least stretchy direction.

- Crosswise Grain (Weft) – Runs perpendicular to the selvage. It has a bit more give than the lengthwise grain.
- Bias Grain – Runs at a 45-degree angle to the lengthwise and crosswise grains. It has the most stretch and drapes beautifully, which is why it's used in bias-cut garments.

◆ **6. .Balance**

This is about how the garment hangs on the body. A balanced garment:

- Sits correctly at the shoulder, waist, and hemline.
- Doesn't pull, twist, or ride up.
- Looks even and symmetrical when worn.

Examples of imbalance:

- A jacket that pulls to the back or front (often caused by incorrect back or front length).

How to create accurate size charts?

First, let's clarify something. We use two separate terms for size charts, depending on the type of information they hold.

The most popular type, which is what you are probably used to, we call **a brand (or general) size chart.** We also use another type which we consider **a product-specific size chart.** Let's look into the differences between those two types of size charts.

The brand size chart (a.k.a. General Size Chart/ Guide) is what most buyers are used to. The chart shows the size names that the brand uses, with the range of the **body measurement of the customer**, that could fit into the respective sizes. The way a buyer would use it, is they would measure themselves and determine in which size's range their measurements fall.

In contrast, **the product-specific size chart** doesn't show the range of measurements that a user must have to potentially fit in the product, but rather **shows the exact measurements of the product in the different sizes.** Again the buyer would have to know their own measurements, but then instead of looking for a range to fit in, the customer will have to check which size covers his own measurement and also consider the amount of ease they would prefer to have with that specific garment.

SizeSense

PRODUCT MEASUREMENTS

Let's define what each product measurement actually includes.

For example, how do we define bust circumference on a dress with sleeves when building our size charts? We use this formula:

BODY MEASUREMENTS + WEARING EASE + DESIGN EASE = PRODUCT MEASUREMENT

These are the three factors that define product measurements - but please note, this applies to stable fabrics (fabrics without elasticity).

When it comes to elastic fabrics, the wearing ease is often reduced or even completely removed, depending on the fabric's stretch and the garment design.

WEARING EASE
Wearing ease is the extra space added to a garment's measurements beyond the exact body measurements to allow for comfort, movement, and functionality when worn.

OK, let me give you an example of wearing eases. As we mentioned, if your fabric is more elastic, you'll likely need less wearing ease. But that also depends on the design of the garment. At the same time, you may need to increase the wearing ease for larger sizes, or overall when using stiff or less elastic fabrics., so the clothes can fit your customers more comfortably and flatter their body shapes better.

Garment	Bust / Chest	Waist	Hip	Notes
Dress	5–7 cm (2–2¾")	2–4 cm (¾–1½")	4–6 cm (1½–2⅜")	Fitted through bodice and hips
Blouse	5–8 cm (2–3")	2–4 cm (¾–1½")	4–6 cm (1½–2⅜")	Varies with sleeve style
Shirt	6–10 cm (2⅜–4")	3–5 cm (1⅛–2")	5–8 cm (2–3")	Ease in shoulder/bicep also important
Top (Tee)	4–6 cm (1½–2⅜")	2–4 cm (¾–1½")	4–6 cm (1½–2⅜")	Knit tops may have negative ease
Jacket	8–12 cm (3–4¾")	4–6 cm (1½–2⅜")	6–10 cm (2⅜–4")	Includes layering ease
Coat	10–15 cm (4–6")	6–10 cm (2⅜–4")	8–12 cm (3–4¾")	Designed for heavy layering
Skirt	—	2–4 cm (¾–1½")	2–4 cm (¾–1½")	Waist ease critical for fit
Pants	—	2.5–4 cm (1–1½")	4–6 cm (1½–2⅜")	Thigh/knee ease may be added
Jeans	—	1–2.5 cm (⅜–1")	2–4 cm (¾–1½")	Minimal ease for snug fit

SizeSense

Garment	Bicep Ease	Thigh Ease	Knee Ease	Notes
Blouse	3–5 cm (1.2–2″)	—	—	Depends on sleeve fullness and fit
Shirt	4–6 cm (1.5–2.4″)	—	—	Room for arm movement
Top (Tee)	2–3 cm (0.8–1.2″)	—	—	Knit fabrics may have negative ease
Jacket	5–7 cm (2–2.75″)	—	—	Designed for layering
Coat	6–8 cm (2.4–3.15″)	—	—	More layering and movement
Pants	—	4–6 cm (1.5–2.4″)	3–4 cm (1.2–1.6″)	Allows for bending/sitting
Jeans	—	2–3 cm (0.8–1.2″)	2 cm (0.8″)	Slim fit; minimal ease
Trousers	—	3–5 cm (1.2–2″)	2.5–3.5 cm (1–1.4″)	Clean tailoring with comfort

SizeSense

DESIGN EASE

Design ease is the extra space added to a garment beyond the body measurements to create a specific silhouette or style.

Unlike wearing ease, which ensures comfort and mobility, design ease shapes the overall look - such as a loose, oversized shirt or a structured A-line dress. It's essential because it allows designers to achieve their intended aesthetic while still considering how the garment fits on the body. Here are a few examples:

Coat	Fitted	8–12 cm / 3–5″	Sleek but functional
	Semi-Fitted	12–20 cm / 5–8″	Works over layers
	Loose	20–30 cm / 8–12″	Dramatic or cocoon shapes
Skirt	Fitted	2–4 cm waist / 4–6 cm hip	Straight and body-skimming
	Semi-Fitted	4–8 cm waist / 6–10 cm hip	Subtle shaping
	Loose	6–12 cm waist / 10–20 cm hip	Flared or gathered styles
Pants	Fitted	2–4 cm waist / 4–6 cm hip	Slim, tailored styles
	Semi-Fitted	4–6 cm waist / 6–10 cm hip	Regular fit
	Loose	6–10 cm waist / 10–20 cm hip	Wide-leg or relaxed pants

SizeSense

Garment Type	Fit Style	Bust/Waist/Hip Design Ease (cm	Notes
Dress	Fitted	2–5 cm / 0.75–2″	Contours the body closely
	Semi-Fitted	5–10 cm / 2–4″	Allows shaping with light drape
	Loose	10–20 cm / 4–8″	Casual or flowing silhouette
Blouse/Shirt	Fitted	3–5 cm / 1.2–2″	Neat, close-to-body fit
	Semi-Fitted	6–10 cm / 2.5–4″	Comfortable yet structured
	Loose	10–20 cm / 4–8″	Oversized or relaxed look
Top/T-Shirt	Fitted	2–4 cm / 0.75–1.5″	May include negative ease for
	Semi-Fitted	6–8 cm / 2.5–3″	Balanced silhouette
	Loose	10–15 cm / 4–6″	Roomy and easy
Jacket	Fitted	6–10 cm / 2.5–4″	Tailored for layering over
	Semi-Fitted	10–15 cm / 4–6″	Structured with ease
	Loose	15–25 cm / 6–10″	Boxy or oversized styles

SizeSense

ELASTICITY

Elasticity in clothing refers to a fabric's ability to stretch and return to its original shape. It's important because it affects comfort, fit, and movement - especially in form-fitting garments like activewear, underwear, or skinny jeans. However, elasticity can't be accurately judged by fabric content alone. For example, two fabrics with the same percentage of elastane may stretch differently depending on the weave, knit structure, or fiber blend. Finishing treatments matter too.

That's why real-life stretch behavior must be tested, not just assumed from the label. First, let me give you some examples of elasticity and how it affects the stretch and fit of clothing.

Fabric Type	Composition	Stretch (from 10 cm)	Stretch (in inches)
Single Jersey	95% Cotton / 5% Elastane	3 - 4 cm	1.18 - 1.57 in
Rib (1x1)	92% Cotton / 8% Elastane	6 - 8 cm	2.36 - 3.15 in
Interlock	100% Cotton	1 - 1.5 cm	0.39 - 0.59 in
French Terry	95% Cotton / 5% Elastane	2.5 - 3.5 cm	0.98 - 1.38 in
Viscose Jersey	96% Viscose / 4% Elastane	4 - 5 cm	1.57 - 1.97 in
Supplex/Lycra	85% Polyamide / 15% Elastane	7 - 10 cm	2.76 - 3.94 in
Elastic Tulle	90% Polyamide / 10% Elastane	6 - 8 cm	2.36 - 3.15 in
Woven Denim	98% Cotton / 2% Elastane	1.5 - 2 cm	0.59 - 0.79 in
Poplin (Woven)	100% Cotton	0.1 - 0.5 cm	0.04 - 0.20 in

So how to measure elasticity properly?

The best way to measure elasticity is by physically stretching the fabric.

First, put the garment on a flat surface, and measure the bust width in its normal relaxed state.

Then grip the garment and stretch it across to its maximum. Now take the measurement.

Calculate the difference in width from its original, relaxed state, to the maximum stretched state.

Then, double the width difference to calculate the elasticity for the full circumference.

If the piece of clothing is made from different materials, you can repeat the same process at the waist and the hips.

However, if the garment is made from a single material, measuring elasticity in one area is sufficient.

Regardless if the clothing is made from a single fabric, if the waistband is interlined, that might lead to a different amount of stretch. In such cases, be sure to measure the elasticity in these interlined areas as well to provide the most accurate data for the algorithm.

SizeSense

How to Create an Accurate General Size Guide for Your Fashion Brand

How to Create an Accurate General Size Charts for Your Fashion Brand

If we want the fashion industry to stop assuming all women have hourglass bodies - and to stop designing in the dark - brands must start using up-to-date data on their customers' body measurements and shapes.

One of the most effective ways to do this is by integrating a size recommendation tool like SizeSense.ai Size Recommender on your website. Not only does it help customers find the right size, but it also provides your brand with valuable analytics: insights into real body measurements, body shapes, and how these correlate with purchase behavior.

This data empowers brands to:
- Design clothing that actually fits their customers
- Produce smarter and avoid overstocking items that don't fit their audience's body type or measurements
- Identify gaps in sizing ranges and uncover new opportunities for inclusivity

Ultimately, your size recommender shouldn't just be a conversion tool - it should be a feedback loop that drives better design, smarter inventory, and a more inclusive product range. A tool that helps you to create your size chart.

When I used to run my fashion brand, we had a high return rate for larger sizes, especially from XL to 4XL. Once we started asking our customers for their body measurements, we realized that the actual measurements were quite different from what we had expected.

We were using linear grading, with a grading step of 6 cm (approximately 2.36 inches) for bust, waist, and hip circumference from XS to 4XL. However, we discovered that this approach didn't reflect the real proportions of our customers. In fact, the difference in waist circumference between sizes L and XL needed to be much larger - around 12 cm instead of just 6 cm. This led us to completely redefine our size chart, especially for the waist measurements in the larger size range.

Start gathering reliable customer measurements with SizeSense.ai and update your size chart accordingly. This will give you invaluable insight into what your customers actually look like. You'll be able to see if you need to add additional sizes - there may be many people who would fit into a size range you currently don't offer. Use this data to see the real picture and make informed decisions.

In conclusion, creating an accurate general size chart is no longer about guesswork or outdated assumptions - it's about leveraging real customer data to make smarter, more inclusive decisions. By using tools like SizeSense.ai, brands can move beyond generic grading rules and start designing for the real people who wear their clothes. A modern size chart isn't static - it's a living system that evolves with your customer insights.

SizeSense

How to Create Accurate Product-Specific Size Charts?

Creating accurate product-specific size charts starts with understanding how body measurements translate into garment dimensions. For woven and stable fabrics by using the formula below to your product measurements. For products made out of elastic fabric you will need to adapt this formula according to elasticity of the fabric.

BODY MEASUREMENTS + WEARING EASE + DESIGN EASE = PRODUCT MEASUREMENTS

Here's how each component of the formula contributes to a precise, customer-focused size chart:

Body Measurements – Use the accurate size data collected through SizeSense.

Wearing Ease – I've shared the standard ease allowances above. Wearing ease should be defined based on the product type, design, and fabric elasticity. For highly elastic fabrics, you may need to reduce the ease values - or even apply negative ease - to ensure the garment fits well.

Design Ease – I've also provided typical values, but as always, it depends on the fabric's elasticity. Be sure to adjust accordingly to maintain the intended silhouette and comfort.

Okay, now you have a reliable size charts. You're now ready to design, produce, and sell clothing that truly reflects your customers' real sizes. This means you're not just building a reliable sizing strategy- but also a powerful retention strategy that turns first-time buyers into loyal customers.

Why? Because 80% of people don't come back if the item didn't fit on their first order.

But even if you add both a general size chart and a product-specific one to your website, there's still one major hurdle - customers often struggle to interpret them.

And no, it's not because they don't know their body measurements.

Let's break one more myth: "Customers don't know their body measurements."

👉 Customers do know their measurements.

This belief still lingers - especially among product developers and patternmakers. But here's the truth:

Especially when you give customers a reason to care - and show empathy by helping them find the right size, they start measuring themselves.

Yes, maybe 10 years ago this was true, nobody knew their measurements.

But today, most shoppers can measure themselves or are more than willing to Google "how to measure bust/waist/hips."

👉 **What they don't know is how to translate those measurements into the right size for your product.**

And that's the real problem.

Because even with a size chart, most customers don't know:
 – How to find the right size when bust, waist, and hips fall in different size ranges because they have different body type.
 – That they need wearing ease in fitted styles, and design ease in loose ones
 – That size charts aren't universal, and "their usual size" isn't a safe bet.

That's exactly why we built SizeSense.ai Size Recommender - a size recommendation tool that does the thinking for them. It compares their body measurements and body shape and preferences with your garment measurements, fabric elasticity, and clothing fit - so they can confidently order the right size. No guessing.

We built **SizeSense.ai** to solve the same problem that once hurt my own fashion brand: returns due to incorrect size.

In our fourth year, we were facing a serious issue - return rates of around 30%, despite having a loyal customer base and selling worldwide. From the US to Japan, from Dubai to Kuwait, plus two boutiques in Sofia - we had reach, but supporting customers in their size choice was huge challenge.

Different markets meant different body types, different measurements.

And while we knew we couldn't be everything for everyone, we also knew that 30% returns were killing our profits. Something had to change.

I started looking into size recommendation tools - hoping to find a solution.

Up until now, I've tested over 30 different size recommendation tools. Whenever I saw one integrated into a store, I'd go test it myself.

Many of them gave the same disappointing experience: they'd suggest two possible sizes. But what's the point of that?

The customer is already unsure - telling her to "choose between this or that" only reinforces the confusion.

What she really needs is one clear recommendation, based on her measurements, preferences, the product's elasticity, and the garment's actual design.

They'd recommend the same size for a loose shirtdress and a fitted shift dress.

Even worse - for pear-shaped customers, they'd suggest the same size for both top and bottom, ignoring obvious shape differences.

For apple-shaped women, the size recommendation was often too large - clearly not taking design or fabric elasticity into account.

But I knew my customers. I had their measurements. Most were pear- or apple-shaped, and any tool that didn't factor in body shape, elasticity, and design intent simply wouldn't work. It would just lead to more returns, more frustration, more waste.

That's the reality that pushed me to build **SizeSense.ai**.

Because when you get sizing right,
you don't just prevent returns and boost conversions
you build trust.

So now you have your size charts, and you're wondering - should you display them on your website?

A general size guide based on body measurements is the bare minimum. But even sharing it can **unintentionally exclude people with different body types** — because most size charts reflect the measurements of the majority of your target customers, not the full diversity of real bodies.

But still - your clothing can often be worn by people who don't perfectly match the measurements in your general size guide. Why? Because elasticity, design (like semi-fitted or loose fits), and fabric type can all allow for flexibility in sizing. That's why I recommend keeping the general size chart mainly for internal use during product development.

Now, what about product-specific size charts?

Yes - you should. Even though many customers struggle to interpret them correctly, having the product-specific size chart available still serves as a helpful reference point. It shows that you've put thought into the fit of each garment and gives customers more confidence in their purchase, especially when paired with a size recommendation tool. Unfortunately, because of the wrong interpretation customers sometimes may see the difference between both.

Why is it hard for customers to interpret size charts?

👉 **They just don't know how to use them.**

Most fashion brands place product size charts next to each item - and when returns happen, they assume the customer ignored the chart.

But the truth is:
 - Customers do check the size chart.
 - They just don't know how to interpret it.

Here's why size charts don't work as well as brands think:

🔶 Half-circumference confusion
Listing "bust: 39 cm" (flat measurement) makes sense to internal teams - but for the average shopper, it's baffling. "How is a real person supposed to fit into that?" Most customers don't realize they need to double that number and add ease for comfort.

◆ No info on elasticity
You say the bust circumference is 78 cm. Can the fabric comfortably stretch another 10 cm to fit the customer's chest? If customers don't know how elastic a garment is, how can they choose the right size?

◆ No mention of ease (Fit buffer in garments)
Your body bust is 89 cm, and the garment bust is 90 cm - so it should fit, right?

Not really. Customers definitely do not know that. Without proper ease, the garment will be too tight.

Most customers don't realize they need to leave extra space for comfort and design ease to ensure the garment fits properly!

◆ Missing key measurements
Many brands list bust and hip circumference of their items - but skip the waist or any other important measurement.
So if your body doesn't follow a "standard" hourglass shape (and let's be honest - most don't), it becomes another guessing game.

Let me give you an example of what usually happens when customers try to use the size chart to find the right size.

SizeSense

Couple of weeks ago my husband was searching for short cargo pants online. He found a pair he really liked - and thankfully, the product page had a product -specific size chart.

He grabbed his old cargo shorts, measured the waistband and hip circumference… but got stuck.

The shorts he measured had a flat waistband. The new ones online? Elastic waistband.

And the size chart didn't say whether the listed waist measurement was relaxed or stretched.

So we spent 15 minutes trying to guess:
- How stretchy is the waistband?
- Will a smaller size still fit?
- If he orders one size bigger, will it be too loose?

Eventually, he gave up.
 "I'll just stop at a store on my way home," he said.

And that's how a brand lost a customer who was ready to buy.
 One more abandoned cart - caused by size uncertainty.

💡 60% of abandoned carts happen because shoppers are unsure what size to order.

Imagine if this brand had an accurate size recommendation tool that helped customers instantly find their size - no guesswork, no frustration and more customers that convert.

So stop losing money on returns - and contributing to the $218 billion in return-related costs, emissions, and pollution.

Let me show you how I reduced return rates for my fashion brand from 30% to just 8% using methods that actually work.

EARN MORE WITHOUT INVESTING MORE!

TECH STACK AND SIZE RECOMMENDATION TOOLS:

Installing an inaccurate size recommendation tool on your website could actually cost you sales.

Here's why fashion brands should **avoid size recommendation tools that make these mistakes:**

✖ No 1:1 alignment between clothing and customer body measurements

Generic size recommendations fail to account for each garment's unique measurements, design, and manufacturing variations. They do not consider the size inconsistency between the brands and within the brand. When this happens, customers end up with the wrong fit - leading to lost sales.

✖ Ignoring elasticity into size calculation

A pear-shaped customer shopping for stretchy jeans may be told they won't fit if fabric elasticity isn't considered by the size recommendation tool - again this costing the brand a sale!

✖ Overlooking clothing design

A customer may wear one size in a loose, elastic dress but need a size or two up for a non-stretch shift dress. This difference can make or break a sale. So if a size recommender does not consider the design of the clothing - well, guess, they might giving wrong recommendations to your customers.

✖ **Ignoring body shape**

Two people with the same height and weight can have very different proportions, which directly affects how clothes fit them. Accurate size recommendations should account for this variability. Size recommendation tools that calculate the size by only asking customers for their height and weight cannot give precise recommendation - so they may mislead your customers.

✖ **Neglecting fit preference**

17% of women prefer fitted clothing, 20% prefer a looser fit, and the rest opt for a regular fit. Ignoring this can lead to wrong fit recommendations and lost sales.

In today's market, it's too late to experiment with inaccurate size recommendations, especially when returns are skyrocketing at an unprecedented rate.

So why SizeSense.ai is so different and it is the most accurate size recommendation tool on the market?

It creates a 1:1 alignment between customer body measurements and the exact measurements of the specific garment being considered.

It factors in fabric elasticity in its recommendations - something no other tool does (prove me wrong!).

It delivers tailored recommendations based on clothing design, customer preferences, and body shape.

It helps educate customers on why returns hurt everyone - brands, customers, and the environment.

It provides clear, data-backed answer why a particular size will or won't fit.

It's honest: if no size will fit, it tells the customer upfront to help prevent returns.

It indicates whether neighboring sizes would be suitable for a tighter or looser fit.

Plus, it lets you display your size charts right next to the product for easy customer reference.

SizeSense

Get my 10 proven strategies that helped me reduce return rates for my fashion brand from 30% to below 10% (usually as low as 8%. around Christmas and Black Friday - 10%)

SizeSense

10 Strategies to Reduce Returns for Your Fashion E-commerce Store

 1. Use SizeSense.ai

Having an accurate size recommendation tool like SizeSense on your website is crucial for reducing returns - it's the only tool that factors in fabric elasticity when determining the right size.

Shopping online is gambling without an accurate size recommendation tool that helps customer to choose the right size, even if there are product-specific size chart next to the product customers don't know:

- How to find the right size between bust, waist, and hips if they fall in different size ranges.

- That they need comfort ease in fitted styles, and design ease in loose ones

- They can't calculate the right size because sizing depends heavily on wear preferences and fabric elasticity. Brand should have a size recommendation on their website otherwise they leave customers guessing..

When customers know that you know their size:

✔Increase in genuine AOV - because people actually order more due to knowing your size/fit/feel is right for them.

✓Increase in CRO - you've solved the size/fit/feel problems for them, so now they buy with confidence.

✓Drop in returns - dynamic positive impact on the entire top/bottom line.

✓Increase in customer retention and repeat sales - they now know your products work for them.

2. Educate customers
Explain to your customers why finding the right size matters - not just for their convenience, but for the planet.

Returns are costly, both financially and environmentally. Most customers don't realize how harmful they can be until someone shows them. **That's why education is the key.** Share your sustainability goals, your commitment to reducing waste, and how a smaller footprint starts with fewer returns.

With SizeSense, you can deliver gentle, educational messages throughout the customer journey - helping them choose the right size while building awareness and trust.

SizeSense
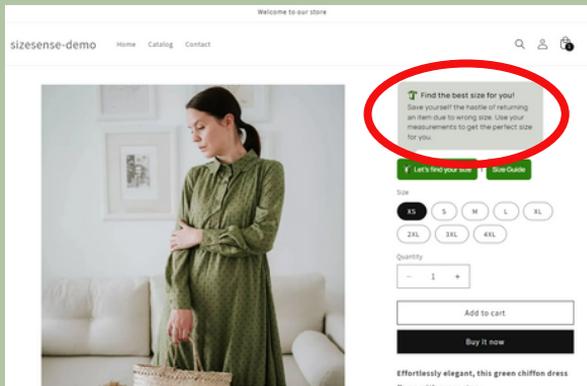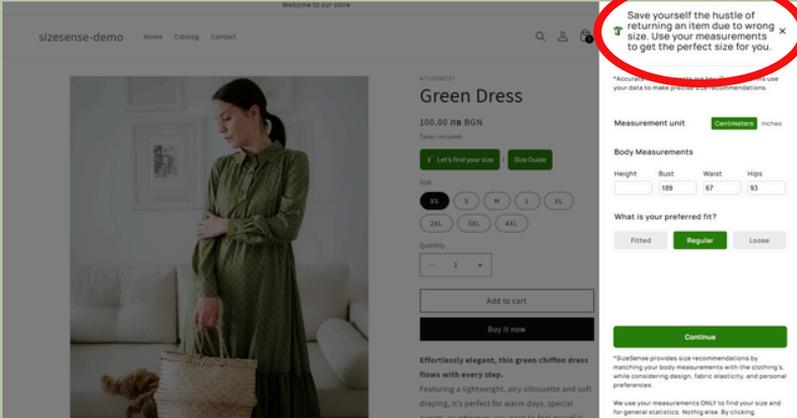
3. **Provide supportive, well-explained answers that clearly show why certain sizes may not fit them.**

Some customers may insist they're a smaller size - and yes, sizing can be a sensitive topic, especially for women. But by offering kind, fact-based explanations can help them understand the reasoning. When customers feel informed rather than judged, they're more likely to trust your recommendation - and ultimately, feel better in the clothes they choose.
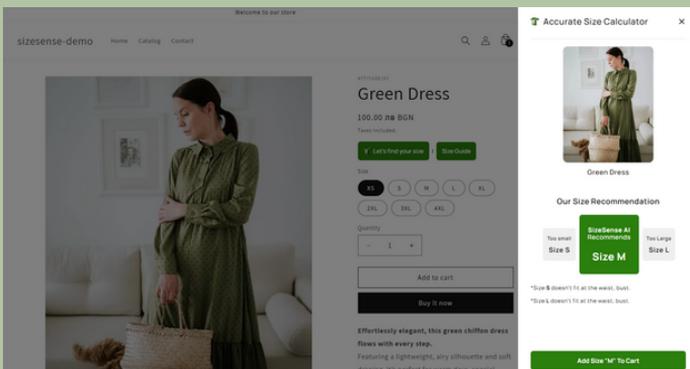
4. Getting the Right Customers Is the First Step to Making the Fit Work

SizeSense tells your customers when something won't fit - even if that means no sale. Because SizeSense is honest.
We know this matters.

First, because it helps prevent returns and customer disappointment. And second, because it opens the door to attracting new customers with similar body measurements — the ones most likely to get the perfect fit.

Most other size recommendation tools always give a size, even if it's not accurate. And once they assign you a size, they often apply that same size across all products on the website. But that's unrealistic - you can't be the same size for every product, especially if your body type isn't hourglass.

And now imagine the damage caused when these size recommendation tools not only give inaccurate suggestions - but also apply them across every product. A customer might order a dozen items in the wrong size, only to return them all.

5. Offer "Free Returns" Only to Customers Who Used SizeSense.ai for their purchase.

Encourage intentional shopping. We recommend offering "Free Returns" only to customers who actively try to find their right size before completing the order. Highlight your size recommendation tool on your product pages and offer free returns only to those who use it - encourage conscious shopping.

6. Educate Customers in Your Order Confirmation Emails

When someone places an order, use your confirmation email to share your sustainability goals - and if the customer didn't use a size recommendation tool, kindly ask for their body measurements so you can double-check the sizing and ensure the best possible fit.

Helping customers find their best fit isn't about body shaming. It's about giving them the information they need to feel comfortable, confident - and respected. It shows care and it underlines your sustainability goals.

8. Do not put labels "True to size" next to your products

Fit isn't just about measurements — so using labels like these next to your products can actually confuse customers, especially those ordering for the first time.

Size is about fabric. Body shape. Elasticity. Style. Personal preference. It's emotional as much as it is technical or just a simple mathematical calculation.

As we've already said - let me illustrate it with a simple story:

Two women. Same bust, waist, and hip measurements.
Woman A loves tailored, fitted clothing.
She wants her blazer to cinch perfectly at the waist.

Woman B prefers a loose, relaxed fit. She wants her clothes to move with her - not cling to her.

Same body. Different expectations. Different sizing needs.

If both women buy the same "true to size" jacket, only one will be happy. The other will feel disappointed - not because the sizing was wrong, but because the fit didn't match her expectations.

This is why "true to size" is a myth. True to whose wear preferences?

9. **When customers leave a review, ask if they're comfortable sharing their body measurements and wear preferences - so others with similar bodies and style preferences can find the right size faster.**

- Make it optional and respectful
- Explain why you're asking
- Tell customers that this info helps future shoppers find the right fit - and reduces returns. Transparency builds trust.
- Keep it simple

10. Show product-specific size charts next to your products

If you're not using a reliable size recommendation tool, the minimum you should do is display detailed clothing measurements for each product. SizeSense can help you integrate size charts right next to your products - but it's important to know that most customers struggle to interpret them.

- What should they choose if their bust, waist, and hips fall into different size ranges?
- Do they know they need comfort ease in fitted styles and design ease in looser ones?
- Most can't calculate the right size on their own, because sizing depends heavily on wear preferences and fabric elasticity.