BOLD METRICS

BUYER'S GUIDE

How to Choose the Best Sizing Technology:

A Guide for Apparel Companies

FIT & SIZING TECHNOLOGY BUYER'S GUIDE

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Introduction

In today's dynamic apparel industry, staying ahead of the competition not only requires innovation, but a deep understanding of your customers' needs and preferences. Regardless of what is going on with the economy — conversion, customer confidence, bracketing, and returns remain vital KPIs for many brands to achieve success. When these metrics aren't performing as well as they could be, it results in lost revenue, low customer loyalty, broken data loops, wasted materials, a disconnect between product designers and customers… the list goes on.

And what customers overwhelmingly want and need is a personalized yet streamlined purchasing process. If you can quickly and easily communicate to a shopper not just what their best size might be in their preferred garment, but how that garment will fit their body, you are well on your way to securing a lifetime customer.

Think of how an associate supports a customer as they enter a store: the associate guides the customer to their preferred style, helps them narrow down the sizes, guides them to the dressing room to try it on, and most importantly, helps the customer feel confident about their purchase. Pulling this off online can be difficult but if you can do that, you'll build a base of engaged and loyal customers that will return time and time again.

How do you do that? By dialing in your fit and sizing technology. While online apparel sizing is a very complex problem, with the right technology, your brand could increase conversion and average order value (AOV), reduce returns, and optimize operations from design to distribution season after season.

Narrowing down sizing technology options may seem overwhelming at first, but that's why we created this guide: to make the process easier by taking you through evaluating your options step by step.



We'll discuss why the state of the apparel industry needs fit and sizing matters now more than ever, walk you through evaluating fit tech options, making a final decision, getting internal buy-in, and more. After working through this guide, your entire organization will be well on its way to higher conversion and AOV, fewer returns, operational excellence, and doing your part to make the apparel industry more environmentally friendly.

You will find this guide especially helpful if you:

- ☑ Have tried sizing and fit technology in the past but didn't get the results you were looking for
- ☑ Want to boost your revenue by increasing conversion, average order value (AOV), and/or revenue per visitor (RPV)
- ☑ Would like to reduce your fit-related returns
- ☑ Are investing in sustainability, but want to do so in a way that will have a measurable impact and also helps your bottom line
- ☑ Your organization is interested in capturing your actual customer body data to help facilitate design optimizations and improve operations throughout the supply chain

SECTION 1

The State of the Apparel Industry

In 2023, revenue for the apparel market topped $1.75 trillion globally, and, despite an everchanging economic climate - signs point to continued positive growth.[1] However, from the smallest names to the biggest fashion houses, brands and retailers are leaving thousands — if not millions — of dollars on the table every single day.

Returns for clothing ordered online equates to billions of dollars in both returned merchandise and processing costs.

The number one reason for these returns?

→ Poor fit

Unfortunately, this is not a new trend — Narvar has found poor fit/size to be the top reason for returns six years in a row. The report concludes that this trend "indicates that retailers have yet to maximize their AR and fit technology investments or unlock the full value of the sizing data customers are providing."[2]

If you've been in the apparel industry for a while, you know that customer confidence is everything. A shopper needs to believe that the item they're buying will fit how they expect, look how they expect, and be worth the money that they're paying for it. When it comes to clothing styles, the options are many — from relaxed or boyfriend fit to slim or straight fit — and if a shopper can't tell from your website how that pair of pants or shirt will fit, they likely won't have the confidence to purchase.

Think about your own online clothing purchases: If you are in between sizes on a size chart or can't quite figure out which size is the better option or how a garment might look on your body vs. the model on the screen, how likely are you to buy the item? You probably won't — or you'll buy multiple sizes and return the ones that don't fit. Lack of customer confidence can tank a brand's conversion, increase your returns, and almost guarantee that the shopper won't give you a second chance.

And then there are the first-time customers who you worked so hard — and spent so much money — to acquire. They pop on your site, can't figure out their size and off they go, taking your marketing money right out the window with them.

Those who do decide to take a gamble on your product when sizing options aren't clear will likely bracket — buy multiple sizes with the intent to return the one that doesn't fit (bracketing behavior). In fact, another Narvar survey from 2022 showed that 63% of shoppers bracket, a jump from 40% in 2017.[3]

What has been proven to build customer confidence to decrease bracketing and increase conversion and AOV?

→ A fit technology solution fueled by shopper body data.

> “The first thing they’re [consumers] going to look at when they get something is fit. Fit and style are the top two. And so consumers have a ton of options today — especially in the direct-to-consumer world — from which brands they’re going to buy from. If you don’t nail fit, or at least tell them exactly what it’s going to be and they can buy accordingly, then you’re not going to retain customers. You’re going to pay to acquire them, they’re going to return the products, and they’re never going to come back.”



DREW COOK
CFO AND HEAD OF OPERATIONS PACT

Investing in AI Sizing Webinar WATCH NOW

Lastly, another unfortunate result of these returns is their effect on the environment. It’s no secret that the apparel industry creates a lot of waste, but when a pile of discarded returns can be seen from space, we’d say the problem has gotten a bit out of control.

And considering that 65% of Americans believe retailers should prioritize sustainability, it’s important to your customers, too.[4]

All this is to say that the way brands and retailers have always done things is prime for a change. Advanced sizing solutions powered by generative AI are here and are making a real difference for forward-thinking companies that have embraced the technology. There’s no better time than now to prioritize your fit strategy.





SECTION 2

Why Fit and Sizing Matters Now More Than Ever

The standard sizing system we — still — use today for clothing was established during the 1800s to meet demand for uniforms during the Civil War. Initially, soldiers' uniforms were custom-made, but the need for efficiency led to the mass production of uniforms categorized into four size groups (small, medium, large, and extra-large), with fit being less important than rapid production. Women's clothing followed a similar path, transitioning to standardized sizing in the 1940s based on the "most common" body measurements collected from 15,000 women via the Women's Army Corps survey. The biggest downside of continuing to use this system is that it did not (and still doesn't) accurately reflect the diversity of women's body shapes and sizes, and many consumers struggled to find clothing that fits well.

In the 1950s, the National Bureau of Standards introduced the "Misses" and "Junior Misses" sizing system, incorporating age, body measurements, and proportions. Despite its widespread adoption, it too fell short of capturing the range of women's bodies accurately. While adjustments like specialized sizing have been made, the Misses and Junior Misses sizing systems remain the core structure for current U.S. women's clothing sizing standards.

A lot has changed since then, which begs the question:

? Why are we still using the same methods for clothing sizing?

Consumer shopping habits and preferences have changed, too. We no longer flip through a catalog and send in an order form, we can order clothing at the touch of a button from our sofas. Brand loyalty is hard to gain and easy to lose.

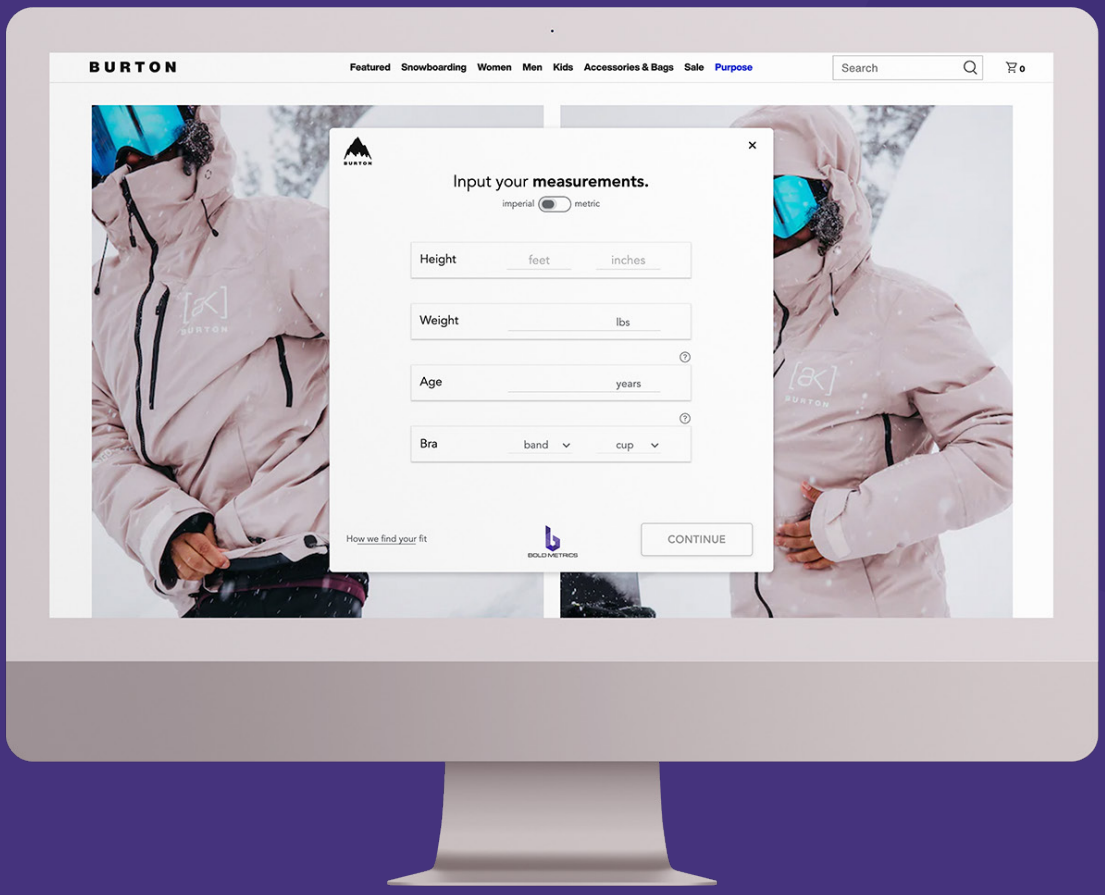
Shoppers in the 21st century crave a personalized shopping experience. It's not just about buying an article of clothing, it's about how that clothing will fit their body (not the model's body), how it will make them feel, how it reflects their personal style, and what the company stands for (or doesn't stand for). When done effectively, personalization can drive growth throughout the customer lifecycle.

And, as we touched on before, there's nothing more personal than fit.

> “Everything related to fit is a huge factor in that purchasing decision.”



MATTHEW AMES
SR. GLOBAL ECOMMERCE STRATEGIST, BURTON

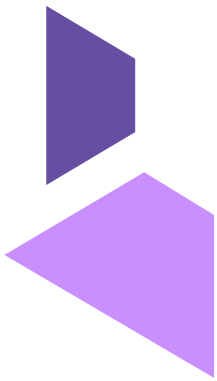


The Impact of an AI Sizing Solution Webinar **WATCH NOW**

The Cost of Using the Wrong Sizing Solution

When a shopping experience feels generic and customers are confused about their size or how an item might fit, it results in:

- **Lost conversions:** Shopper hesitation around fit and sizing is a huge driver for low conversion — and the impact is even more severe for new shoppers.
- **High returns:** Poor fit accounts for 65% of returns and is the number one reason for apparel returns across the industry.[5]
- **Bracketing:** 63% of shoppers bracket when sizing options are unclear, resulting in automatic returns for the size or sizes that don't fit.[3]
- **Negative impacts to customer lifetime value (CLV):** You get one shot at a new customer. If an item doesn't fit as expected, they are not likely to come back.
- **Sustainability:** High returns and ineffective design that doesn't meet consumer needs can destroy a brand's sustainability efforts.
- **Just a button:** Simple "plug and play" widgets, brand comparisons, and survey lookup tools don't allow for fit preferences or size variations, and don't accurately capture customer body data to impact design optimizations.



Inaccurate sizing contributes to everything listed above, driving up costs throughout the product lifecycle. When products aren't designed based on data from actual shoppers and instead are designed from outdated fit models and mannequins that might not even reflect your customer base, there is a huge disconnect between product design and actual customers, which results in clothes not fitting as expected and negatively impacting your CLV.

The Value of Using the Right Sizing Solution

The benefits of implementing a sizing solution that guides customers towards their best size and fit are many, and the impact is felt across an organization:

- Increased conversion
- Increased AOV
- Reduced return rates
- Arming designers with digital twin data from actual customers
- Improve the customer experience of your brand
- Increase customer satisfaction and brand loyalty
- Progress made towards sustainability initiatives
- Optimizing inventory management
- More accurate planning for peak seasons
- Developing more effective marketing strategies and campaigns

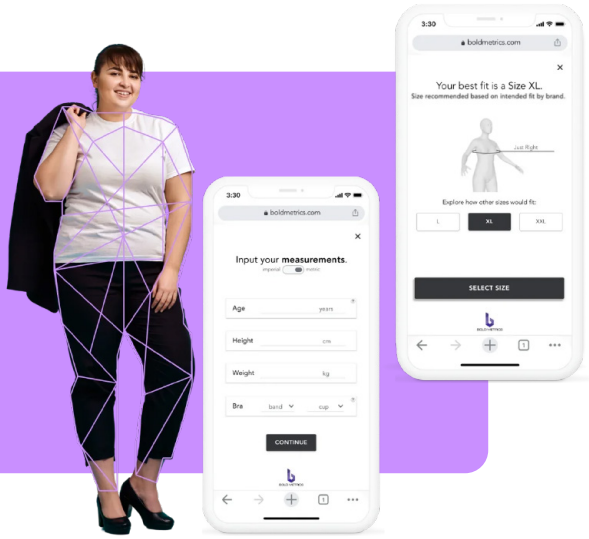
The time is now.

Stop losing money and customers to sizing confusion.

Conversion, Returns, and Personalization:

The Impact of AI Apparel Sizing Technology

READ NOW



SECTION 3

Evaluating Sizing Solutions

Not all sizing technology is created equal, so it's important to consider your options carefully to decide which approach is best for your brand. It may feel like everyone offers some sort of sizing technology these days and it can be really confusing to understand the differences, so we outlined the main options and the pros and cons of each.

There are currently six main types of sizing technology: size charts, brand comparisons, mobile scanning devices/apps, 3D body scanners, customer survey lookups, and an AI machine-learning platform.

SIZE CHARTS

Size charts are about as low-tech as it gets: they simply show how different body measurements correspond to different sizes.

Pros:

- ☑ **Low cost and easy to implement.**
- ☑ **May be helpful to shoppers who already know their body measurements.**

Cons:

- Most customers do not know their measurements, and using a tape measure is subject to human error (if they have a measuring tape in the first place).
- Size charts aren't always up-to-date, leading to inaccuracy.
- When faced with a size chart, most people guess their size or purchase multiple items of the same style in different sizes (bracketing), leading to higher return rates.
- Size charts can be confusing, especially if someone is in between sizes or has measurements in two different size categories.
- Size charts also do not take into account personal fit preferences or show a garment's unique fit characteristics.

Size	XXS	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL	3XL
Numeric Size	00	0-2	4-6	8-10	12-14	16	18	20
Arm (in)	30	30-30.5	30.5	31	31	31	31.5	31.5
Chest (in)	29-31	31-33	33-35	35-37	37-39.5	39.5-42.5	42.5-45.5	45.5-49.5
Natural Waist (in)	22-24	24-26	26-28	28-30	30-33	33-37	37-41	41-45
Hips (in)	32-34	34-36	36-38	38-40	40-42.5	42.5-45.5	45.5-48.5	48.5-52.5
Equivalent Men's Size	*	XXS	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL

BRAND COMPARISONS

Compare an item's size to another brand's sizing to give the customer a recommendation. Usually, the brand comparisons are with well-known brands, which assumes that customers are familiar with how that apparel fits.

Pros:

- ☑ **Quick to implement due to simple comparison.**

Cons:

- Unfortunately, this method equates a brand as one type of fit, therefore recommending the same size in every style without considering individual styles or categories, nor considering shopper fit preference. Often results in poor accuracy and

amplifies returns due to different fits (slim, modern, relaxed, etc.).
- Showcases competitors on your website.
- Unable to provide brands with access to customer body data or additional insights to help with business decision-making.
- Collects data that is shared with competitors.
- Often encourages profile creation or registration and collection of personally identifiable information (PII), which leads to privacy concerns.
- Does not fully address customer satisfaction or return rates.

MOBILE SCANNING APPS

Downloaded onto a customer's smartphone and require selfies or a recording of the shopper to generate digital measurements.

Pros:

☑ **Apps are readily accessible given high mobile phone adoption rates.**

Cons:

- Very low adoption due to requiring the shopper to change into tight-fitting, body-skimming clothing.
- Limited impact due to conversion rate due to the low accuracy and human error involved.
- There are also privacy concerns over how a customer's data is used.

3D BODY SCANNERS

Use optical devices to scan a person's body to achieve highly accurate measurements.

Pros:

☑ **Create personalized customer body profiles.**

Cons:

- Only available for use in-store, given the size of the scanners.
- Customers must remove their clothes or wear skin tight clothing/underwear for accurate results, leading to privacy concerns around data ownership and usage.
- High-fidelity scanners can be prohibitively expensive, limiting scalability and adoption.

CUSTOMER SURVEY LOOKUPS

Clusters survey responses with trends seen on purchases to lookup and group similarly answered survey questions to certain sizes purchased. For example, 10 people who buy a small shirt are within a certain height/age/weight range, the technology will recommend a size small to anyone in that range.

Pros:

☑ **Easy to implement because the technology isn't very complicated.**

☑ **Can be helpful for people who fall into a typical size range and wear one style of clothing/garment type.**

Cons:

- Isn't based on actual body measurements, it's just matching similar responses.
- Struggles to positively impact return rates as not all shoppers who buy a small have the same fit preferences — some might be a medium who likes a tighter fit, some might be an extra-small who likes a looser fit, etc.
- Doesn't show how a particular garment is going to fit a shopper's body shape.
- Doesn't consider individual fit preference.

AI MACHINE-LEARNING PLATFORMS

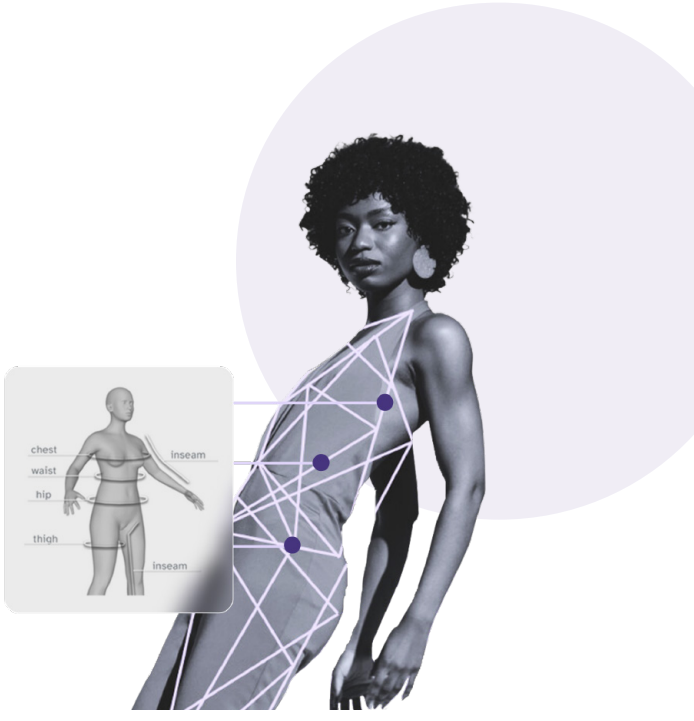
Uses AI to calculate consumer body measurements from just 4-6 inputs from a shopper. This can result in creating a digital twin of the shopper and highly accurate size recommendations while showing fit preference on a per-garment basis.

Pros:

- ☑ **Easy to implement online and in-store.**
- ☑ **Greater accuracy in results over time because the algorithms learn via a feedback loop.**
- ☑ **Brands see an increase in conversion, AOV, and reduced returns.**
- ☑ **In-depth understanding of how apparel fits the customer.**
- ☑ **Customer data captured creates a library of shopper digital twins.**
- ☑ **Upstream garment sizing insights inform better-fitting clothing.**
- ☑ **No registration is required nor is any PII collected.**
- ☑ **ROI occurs immediately with an increase in CVR and AOV.**
- ☑ **Long-term ROI with return reductions.**

Cons:

- May require increased investment as it drives more value across the organization
- Not all AI is the same: Some companies claim to use AI to compare your garments to other brands, while others use AI to generate body measurements and highly accurate size recommendations.



> At Men's Wearhouse, our goal is to offer timeless and contemporary style and great service for the moments that matter.
>
> In order to deliver on that promise, fit is king. So having a deeply integrated and world-class fit technology solution is just absolutely paramount for our success."



DANIEL CARPENTER
SR. DIRECTOR, DIGITAL PRODUCT MANAGEMENT, TAILORED BRANDS

Bold Metrics also has a comprehensive QA process in place to ensure recommendations are more accurate for your specific brand and fit intentions from day one.

Below, you'll find a sizing technology comparison chart that highlights the key features a successful sizing solution should have so that you can easily compare fit technology features and narrow down your choice.

VIEW THE COMPARISON CHART

SECTION 4

Making the Final Choice

> *"Surface-level technologies give you surface-level results."*



DAINA BURNES
CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF BOLD METRICS

When it comes to sizing technology, you get what you pay for, which is why it's important to carefully weigh the pros and cons before choosing a solution. Once you've narrowed it down to your top 2-3 choices, it's time to get a demo and see the technology in action. Typically running anywhere from 30-60 minutes, a demo is when a representative of the company walks you through an overview of their platform to highlight the features and functions that it can offer. This is your opportunity to see the solution, ask any questions, and determine which solution you want to move forward with implementing.

To **make the most** of your demo:

- ☑ Have your checklist available to ask any questions you might have about any of the features — if you don't see something during the demo, be sure to ask!
- ☑ Ensure that at least one of the primary decision makers attends the demo or get a recording for them to watch later.
- ☑ Tell the company what you are looking for and what your challenges are around sizing.
- ☑ Ask questions, ask them to slow down, ask them to repeat something — this is your time so make the most of it!
- ☑ Give them the chance to address any concerns you might have.

> “The thing that really stood out with Bold Metrics is not just their focus around fit, but also their fit preference... that was something that really stood them apart from all the other solutions that we evaluated.”



MATTHEW AMES
SR. GLOBAL ECOMMERCE STRATEGIST, BURTON



Burton’s Customer Story READ NOW

SECTION 5

Getting Internal Buy-In

As with anything else that requires budget spend, you may need to make your case for why now is the right time for a sizing solution. Budgets can be thin when it comes to adding new technology, so be prepared to prove the value of your chosen sizing solution.

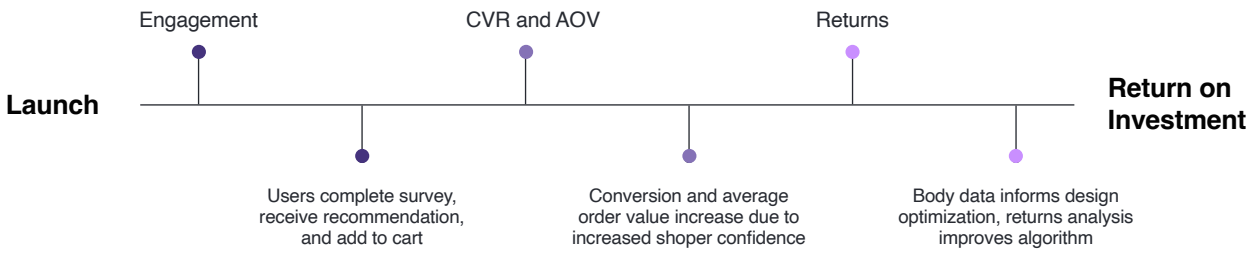
A few ways to do that include:

- Reinforcing why your organization can't afford to wait, especially if you are approaching a holiday or peak season (see list below). In short, the sooner you implement a solution, the sooner you can begin realizing the value, but also start capturing customer body data and building your customer digital twin library.
- Sharing the expected results for the KPIs and ROI calculator from your demo.
- Preparing a proposed budget that outlines exactly where the money will come from — because a fit and sizing solution offers a shared value across an organization, consider leveraging budget from multiple sources, such as eCommerce, Operations, and Design.

The time is now. Your organization can't afford to wait any longer to implement a sizing solution, because:

- Consumers deserve accurate sizing recommendations and better-fitting clothes.
- Customer experience is key: Shoppers want a streamlined, personalized shopping experience. Adding an accurate sizing solution that incorporates fit preference offers a better, faster experience that delivers an immediate impact to conversion/revenue.
- Reducing customer support calls around sizing gives your team more time to work on pressing customer issues and relationship building.
- Every day that goes by, you are missing out on valuable data collection that can be used to inform design, merchandising, and inventory for peak seasons and year-round.
- Brands that use AI sizing solutions and customer body data set themselves apart from the competition in accuracy, ROI, and customer satisfaction.
- Improving fit and sizing improves every aspect of your organization from marketing and eCommerce to design and production.

Don't forget about other company goals that prioritizing a fit and sizing solution can help you meet, such as being a truly consumer-centric company, reducing customer acquisition costs, and sustainability initiatives.



Conclusion

In a competitive industry like apparel, it's becoming more and more difficult to stand out from every other brand out there and deliver an unforgettable customer experience.

The old ways of doing things won't cut it anymore. It's time for a bold new approach.

Using AI body measurements, years of customer body data, and style-specific size recommendations, Bold Metrics helps forward-thinking apparel businesses use digital twin technology to increase conversion and average order value, reduce returns, optimize operations, and improve sustainability.

Unlocking the power of body data makes sizing simple for your shoppers while allowing you to close the data loop and optimize operations from design to distribution.

How does it work?

- ☑ We take 4-6 inputs from shoppers (height, age, weight, jean waist, bra band/cup — things that don't require a measuring tape!).
- ☑ Our advanced AI algorithms and machine learning models determine over 50 points of measurement with tailor-grade accuracy from those inputs and create a digital twin of the shopper — no personal identifying information (PII) required!
- ☑ Your shopper is then provided their best size recommendation that also shows how different sizes will fit across critical points of measure to account for personal fit preferences.

We think the results speak for themselves, but here's what some of our clients have to say:

"The thing that really stood out with Bold Metrics is not just their focus around fit, but also their fit preference... that was something that really stood them apart from all the other solutions that we evaluated."



MATTHEW AMES
SR. GLOBAL ECOMMERCE STRATEGIST, BURTON

"What really stood out about Bold Metrics was the simplicity of the questions. It's four questions, it's things you know off the top of your head, and it's things that are easy and don't feel too personal to input. With those and then getting an output for a suggested size, the tech integration of automatically selecting that size on your product page and then the quick add to cart, it became something for us that we actually viewed as a conversion optimizer, not something that would stand in the way."



DREW COOK
CTO & HEAD OF OPERATIONS

"Traditionally, we required 16 body measurements from every client to make a pair of bespoke jeans, and these measurements were taken in person using a measuring tape. Now, with the implementation of the Bold Metrics' Virtual Tailor, we are able to collect these same measurements from anyone, anywhere, anytime, and have full confidence that the product we make will fit."



JOSH WEST
CO-FOUNDER & CEO, BLUE DELTA JEAN COMPANY

"I looked at every self-measuring tool on the market before settling on Bold Metrics. Sometimes simpler is better and from a user experience perspective it can't be beaten. Not only is it more accurate than smartphone apps; we were able to customize it to our unique product line and serve customers around the world."



ANDREW PARKES
FOUNDER, EPH APPAREL

"Making sure that our fit is very consistent and that it's easy for him to figure out if he's a large trim or a classic medium, and the differences between the two — making sure that experience is really good on our website is critical for us."



BETHANY MUTHS
CHIEF MARKETING AND CUSTOMER OFFICER, MIZZEN+MAIN

BOLD METRICS

Ready to put us at the top of your list? Book a demo today.

ABOUT BOLD METRICS

Bold Metrics' AI body data platform is a digital twin solution that assists apparel shoppers in finding their optimal size and fit, while concurrently aiding retailers and brands in boosting Average Order Value and Conversion Rate while decreasing returns. From just 4-6 simple shopper inputs, Bold Metrics generative AI technology accurately determines critical points of measure to create unique digital twins of shoppers with over 50 body data measurements. The technology combines shopper body data with brand-specific garment data, providing tailor-level accurate size recommendations that show how an item will fit across critical points of measure — allowing shoppers to choose their best size based on their personal fit preference. The advanced AI platform unlocks scalable access to detailed customer body measurement data to power strategic decision-making from marketing and eCommerce to product and design.

Sources:

1. https://www.statista.com/topics/965/apparel-market-in-the-us/
2. https://deliveryx.net/narvar-finds-nearly-25-of-consumers-will-pay-for-returns-in-exchange-for-convenience/
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4. https://www.retailbrew.com/stories/2023/07/11/survey-retailers-should-prioritize-sustainability?
5. https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-returns

Questions to ask during your demo:

Tell them what you've used in the past, why it didn't work, and ask: How is their solution different?

What role does fit preference play in their size recommendations?

How do they ensure accuracy of their solution?

Are shoppers required to login or register to use the sizing solution?

How does their technology generate size recommendations?

How do they account for differences in styles across product lines?

How easy is the technology for customers to use?

How are new features rolled out?

Are there any new features planned for the next few months?

How is pricing structured? What is included and what is not?

What kind of customer data is collected and how is it used? If it is used, what security measures are in place to ensure data is protected?

What is the expected ROI after implementing this solution?

How can your brand use the customer body data to optimize operations or drive design?

What does the implementation process entail? How long does it take? Are there any additional implementation fees?

What do the dashboard(s) look like? What is the learning curve?

Is there any employee training required?

What does their Customer Success Model look like? What support is and isn't included before and after you go live?

What results can you expect across key metrics (AOV, RPV, conversion, returns reduction, etc.)?

Do they have any case studies they can share or can they connect you with actual clients to share their experience?

How do they use AI and/or machine learning technology? Is it to compare brands or output body measurements?

What other questions do you have?