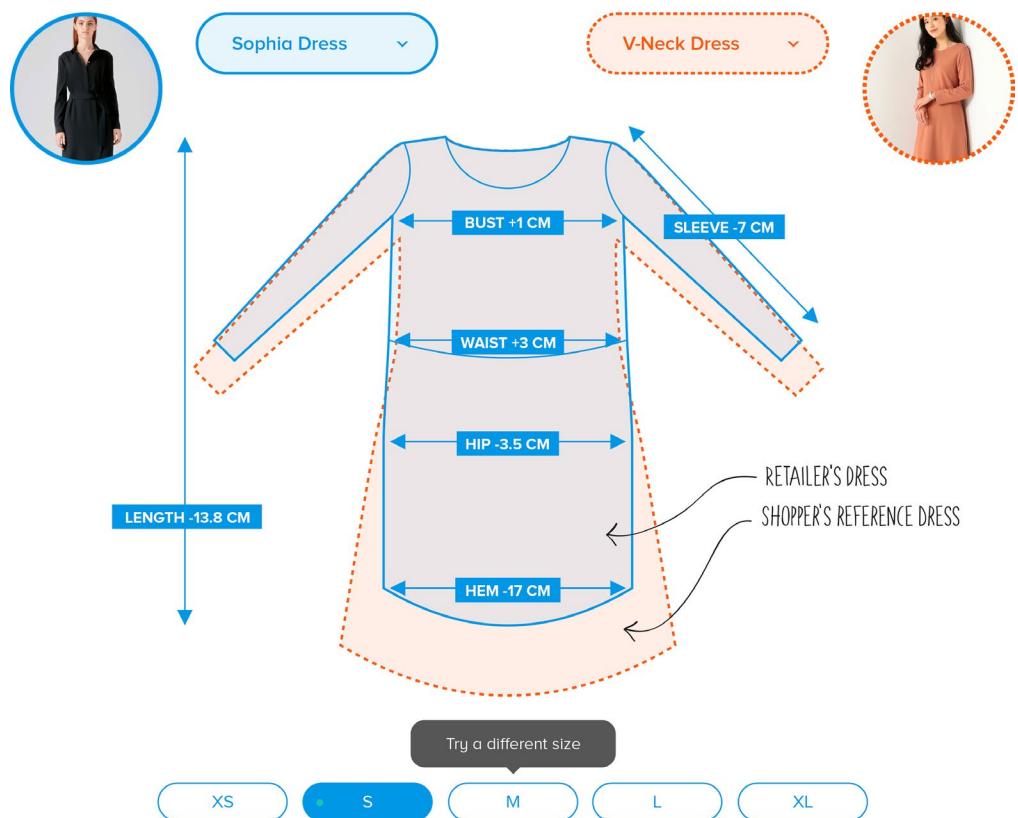


SIZING UP THE COMPETITION

Bennett Faber

DELIVERING CORRECT FITS AND SIZES CAN DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF RETURNS. HERE ARE SOME TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES THAT ALLOW RETAILERS TO ACHIEVE THIS



For fashion retailers, providing well-fitting clothes has long played a vital role. But in the fast-growing industry of e-commerce, proper fit has become an imperative. Size-based returns cost online retailers millions of dollars annually. Not only do returned items result in lost revenue, but the costs of outbound and return shipping and processing orders erode profits even further. The global research and advisory firm Forrester Research estimates that the return rate for online retailers is around 20 to 30 percent.

This is where fit intelligence companies come into play.

Boston-based **TrueFit** is a data-driven personalization platform for footwear and apparel retailers. It uses algorithmic solutions, recommending sizes based on fit data and customer preferences. These recommendations stem from TrueFit's fit and style dataset, made up of detailed product specs, style attributes and consumers' fit comments, which the

company acquired through working with thousands of brand partners and retailers as well as millions of consumers. The company has partnered with **Macy's**, **Nordstrom** and **Kate Spade**. A recent collaboration with **House of Fraser** has seen 3.5 million customer sign-ups and has helped drive a 6–8 percent increase in revenue.

Stockholm's **Virtusize**, which works with **Acne Studios** and **ASOS**, allows shoppers to see how garments will look based on their personal measurements and purchase history. When a customer buys an item, they can superimpose its proportions over a previous item they've bought and visualize the size. Virtusize will log purchasing history on any site that uses its services, so shoppers can freely compare fits between any Virtusize affiliate. Shoppers can upload their own measurements. According to the company's co-founder Peder Stubert, the technology helps to reduce returns by 20–25 percent.

Alvanon is a size and fit consulting firm that works with retailers on the product development level. Rather than guide the customer's purchasing journey, Alvanon helps companies develop the sizing strategy, fit consistency and technical design. Depending on the project, the company uses 3D body scans of shoppers in over 30 global markets, as well as sale size and return metrics, social media feedback or other demographic population studies. Alvanon's clients include **Levi's**, **Patagonia** and **Reebok**.

While the fitting companies market is still young, its technologies advance with each season, so retailers are well poised to gain more customer insights and reduce returns.

www.truefit.com

www.alvanon.com

www.virtusize.com