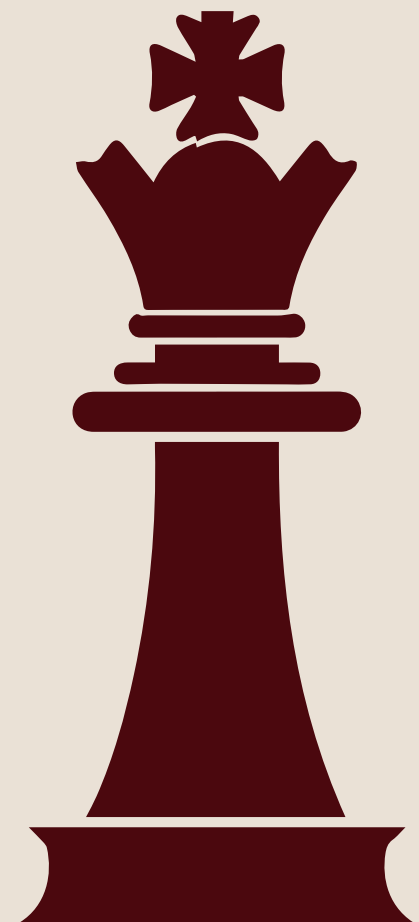




PRODUCT PARADOX

PROBLEM STATEMENT





SecondRoute

THE RETURN THAT IS WORTH MORE THAN THE SALE

The full case, explained

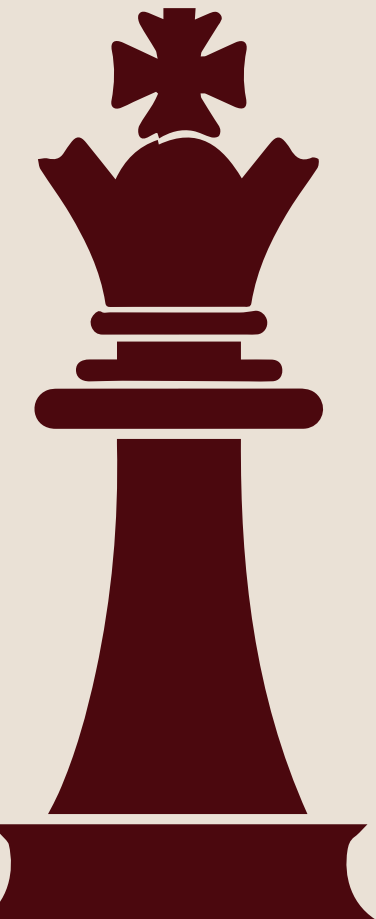
Understand the case, the challenge and the strategy expected from you.

Deck expectations

Know what your final strategy deck should cover.

Submission guidelines

Follow the slide-count and submission requirements.





Index

01

The SecondRoute Case

The full story behind SecondRoute — the business context, why the current process fails, the actual challenge, what your strategy needs to answer, and the constraints you're working within.

02

What We're Expecting In Your Slides

What we expect to see covered in your final strategy deck.

03

Submission Guidelines

How long your deck can be, and what has to be in it.



Who is SecondRoute, and what are they solving?

COMPANY / PRODUCT CONTEXT

SecondRoute is a climate tech startup built for mid-sized e-commerce brands.

It doesn't help them sell more it helps them decide what should happen to a product the moment a customer sends it back.

A RETURNED ITEM CAN GO ONE OF SIX WAYS

- *Resold*
- *Refurnished*
- *Exchanged*
- *Donated*
- *Recycled*
- *Written off*

THE CHOICE ISN'T FIXED

Picking the right one depends on five things at once shift a single factor, and the right answer can flip:

- *Item's condition*
- *Product category*
- *Location*
- *Season*
- *Cost to recover it*



Why today's approach falls short and the real business problem

HOW BUSINESSES DECIDE TODAY

Most businesses still make this decision through fixed rules and spreadsheets — the same rule applied to every return, no matter how different two returns actually are.

THE RESULT

Perfectly usable products lose value for no good reason. A rule can't weigh condition, category, location, season and recovery cost all at once so businesses default to writing things off, discounting them, or shipping them the wrong way, over and over, at scale.

EXAMPLE: Take a blanket rule like “recycle all returned electronics.” It treats a shattered unit and a barely touched one exactly the same even though one is scrap and the other is basically new stock.

THE BUSINESS PROBLEM IN THE CASE'S WORDS

“Help businesses choose the highest-value, lowest waste next destination for every return.”

IN PLAIN TERMS

Build something that makes the resell or refurbish or exchange or donate or recycle or write off call automatically, every time a product comes back.

Treat “highest value” and “lowest waste” as one decision, not two they're usually the same answer.



Your Challenge



THE PROMPT, WORD FOR WORD

“Design the next version of SecondRoute. Choose one category of returned goods and create a product that can make a better disposition decision quickly, while fitting into the retailer's existing operations.”

WHAT THAT ACTUALLY ASKS OF YOU

- **Pick one category**

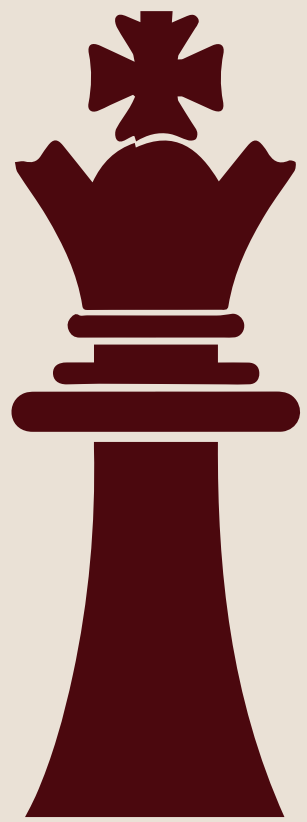
Commit to one type of returned good apparel, electronics, furniture, whatever you choose instead of trying to solve for all of them at once.

- **Fit into what already exists**

Whatever you design has to slot into how the retailer already works. Nobody's ripping out their existing systems for this.

- **Build a decision maker, not a dashboard**

It has to actually tell the retailer what to do with a given return, fast showing them data isn't the same as making the call for them.





Understanding the Customer, Building the Product

Before you design anything, get sharp on who you're building for and what's broken then define what you'd build and why it wins.

- **Target Customer**

Which category should we target first?

WHY IT MATTERS: Returns vary by resale value, shelf life, and handling cost. The first category shapes what follows.

- **MVP**

What 3–5 capabilities are essential?

WHY LIMIT IT: Build a focused first version not an all in one platform that takes too long to ship.

- **Pain Point**

Where do current return decisions fail?

THE STAKES: Pinpoint where today's process breaks and why before proposing a solution.

- **Value Proposition**

Why choose SecondRoute over current methods?

THE REAL TEST: Give retailers a clear, specific reason to switch from their existing process.



Making It a Business and the Constraints You Design Within

• **Monetization**

How should the product capture part of the value it creates?

Why it matters: Whatever you charge has to be smaller than the value you're recovering or the waste you're avoiding that's the whole pricing argument.

• **Roadmap**

What should be automated first, next and later?

The logic: With a small team, the order you build things in decides what actually ships and how fast you can prove this works.

• **Success Metrics**

How will you measure recovered value and avoided waste?

What it proves: Without this, you can't tell whether the product is actually improving outcomes or just looks nicer than a spreadsheet.

CONSTRAINTS MUST DESIGN WITHIN

- *Must integrate with existing e commerce/returns workflows: Retailers won't tear out their existing stack just to adopt a new tool.*
- *Cannot depend on expensive new hardware: Keeps the solution affordable and realistic to deploy for a mid-sized retailer.*
- *Start with one product category or return scenario: Forces real focus instead of trying to solve every case on day one.*
- *The economics must make sense for a mid-sized retailer: The solution has to be viable for your actual target customer, not just enterprise-scale brands.*



What we're expecting

YOUR DECK SHOULD GIVE A CLEAR POINT OF VIEW ON:

- *Problem & Opportunity*
- *Research & Insights*
- *Target User*
- *User Journey*

- *MVP (prototype link optional)*
- *Prioritisation*
- *Unit Economics*
- *Go to Market*

- *Differentiation*
- *Metrics & North Star*
- *Roadmap, Risk*
- *Validation Plan*



How to submit it



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

No fixed slide count: There's no minimum use as many or as few slides as your strategy genuinely needs. Clarity and reasoning matter more than length.

Maximum: 15 slides (hard cap): This total includes the front/cover slide, index slide, appendix, and last page.

Includes: Cover • Index • Appendix • Last page

NOTE:

Treat the case as a starting point make it your own.

There is no single correct solution the quality of the strategy, creativity and reasoning matters.

