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## Web-based tech support service helps Circuit City reduce returns

Many consumers return electronic products like computers and digital cameras because they can't figure out how to use them. Multi-channel electronics retailer Circuit City Stores Inc. has reduced returns with the help of web-based tech support from Plum Choice, an outsourced provider with more than 500 home-based employees ready to aid befuddled consumers.

"Unequivocally, when we attach service to a sale, returns are reduced," says Brooks Gordon, senior program manager for remote services at Circuit City, No. 16 in the Internet Retailer Top 500 Guide. Depending on the product, returns go down by 3% to 5% when the customer buys a service contract, Gordon says.

Circuit City provides tech support through its Firedog service, and the remote part of that service is provided by Plum Choice. Consumers can go to [Firedog.com](http://Firedog.com) to register their products and schedule training sessions, get help through live chat with Plum Choice technicians, and download an application that lets Plum Choice workers link up with consumers' PCs to diagnose and fix problems.

That enables Circuit City customers to get help wherever they are, at a hotel or airport as well as from home, Gordon says. "It's all about being able to generate customer loyalty by providing services they can't get elsewhere," Gordon says. "There's a strong loyalty factor when consumers are able to get something fixed and it's done right the first time."

Circuit City has been working with Plum Choice for two years and the two companies are developing new services that will be announced soon, says Gordon, who declined to provide details.

Plum Choice has been in business for nearly eight years and provides services to five retailers, including Circuit City, says Fred King, vice president of sales and marketing.