



HANDSHAKE



BRONX

CASE STUDY

From Custom Software to an Off-the-shelf Solution

Dutch footwear manufacturer Bronx Shoes replaces its cumbersome custom order management tool with Handshake.



Replacing paper and pen with digital order writing.

Based in the Netherlands, Bronx Shoes has been designing and manufacturing high-quality fashion footwear for over 125 years, creating designs under both their “Bronx” and “Blink” brands, as well as private label designs. The company’s products are especially well-received in European markets, where they’re sold into large, national retailers, as well as independent stores and boutiques.

After spending years working (and struggling) with a custom-built software tool to manage their high volume of sales orders, Bronx Shoes ultimately discovered the power and flexibility of Handshake, an off-the-shelf sales order management solution that includes seamless mobile order writing and submission, as well as a centralized web order management platform.

A Forward-thinking Brand

Eight years ago, when digital sales tools were still nascent, Bronx Shoes was already looking for a solution that would eliminate the inefficiencies of paper-based processes.

Their urgency was primarily driven by the exploding success of their business. Fax machines were overwhelmed with incoming orders, especially during busy seasons when reps would cram up to five appointments into a day. Meanwhile, customer service teams were concentrating almost entirely on manual data entry.

In short, the company was dealing with the same headaches that countless wholesalers are still struggling with today. It was early on, however, when Bronx Shoes decided that their business was growing too fast to continue using paper order forms, price sheets, and catalogs, and they set out to find a third-party agency to build them a custom software solution.



“

Even eight years ago, Fashion Force looked very outdated. As a modern fashion brand, it didn't look good.

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Franklin van Tuijl
Director of Customer Service and IT

The costs of maintaining custom software.

Fashion Force: The Burdens of Custom-Built Software

A long, complex development process resulted in Bronx Shoes' new software tool, a Windows application called Fashion Force that, according to Director of Customer Service and IT Franklin van Tuijl, "looked like it was made in the 70s."

Fashion Force was designed to meet the company's most urgent requirements. Like Handshake, it could be used offline and sync data when connected to the Internet. Like Handshake, it eliminated the need for paper forms.

However, Fashion Force presented a number of problems:

1. It Wasn't Mobile

Fashion Force was a desktop application, requiring sales reps to carry their laptops into appointments. It stored small photos that had to be individually clicked to view. This was a problem especially for some of the company's biggest clients, with whom sales reps could take an entire day to build an assortment. As mobile devices and applications became a de facto standard, Fashion Force became even more antiquated.

2. Making Simple Updates Required Help from Technical Support

Bronx Shoes was beholden to the third party agency that created Fashion Force for any and all changes to the system. If, for instance, they wanted to simply change the price of a certain product, they had to contact the agency, get a cost estimate for the project, and agree on a timeline before the changes could be made. It could take weeks before the task was finally completed.

3. Ongoing Maintenance Drained Resources

Even after making a large up-front investment in the development of Fashion Force, Bronx Shoes was still required to pay a yearly fee to their third party developers, even in cases where no feature changes or improvements were made (not to mention the costs they incurred for simple product catalog updates).



Custom-Built

- Long development process
- Large up-front investment
- Costly, ongoing maintenance
- Inability to keep pace with advancements in technology



Off-the-Shelf

- Ready to customize and use immediately
- Low up-front investment
- Constant updates from the software vendor
- Focus on selling, not software maintenance

An off-the-shelf solution: rapid time-to-value and continuous improvement.

Handshake: The Benefits of An Off-the-Shelf SaaS Solution

Today, Software as a Service (SaaS), or software that is owned, delivered, and managed remotely by a vendor, is transforming the way people do business. These off-the-shelf, agile solutions are highly scalable and customizable, adapting readily to existing workflows.

Bronx Shoes saw the value in this approach, choosing Handshake to replace Fashion Force. A mobile application and web order management solution designed to help wholesale businesses eliminate paper order writing, ship orders faster, and reduce order processing costs, Handshake offered many of the advantages that Fashion Force failed to deliver:

1. A Modern, Mobile Experience

Bronx Shoes sales reps now sell with iPads, and they can quickly and seamlessly swipe through their entire collection, zoom in on high resolution product images, and hand the iPad over to their customers for an interactive experience.

2. Greater Internal Control Over Data

Handshake has empowered the Bronx Shoes team to take control of their own data for the first time in eight years. Internal administrators were quickly trained by Handshake's Customer Success Specialists to manipulate data and make any catalog additions or changes needed--without long project delays or extra costs.

3. Constant Improvements and Updates

In contrast with costly custom software like Fashion Force, Handshake is constantly improved, updated, and maintained, keeping pace with rapid advancements in technology while adding features and functionality over time. Updates to the product, hosted in the cloud, are delivered instantly.



“We are much more flexible in using our own data with Handshake. If sales reps realize that they want us to include materials descriptions for each product, we no longer have to pay a third party. We can do it ourselves and give our sales reps the information they need.”

Franklin van Tuijl
Director of Customer
Service and IT,
Bronx Shoes

A deep understanding of the needs of wholesale businesses.

Leveraging the Expertise of a Dedicated Software Vendor

At first glance, it may seem counterintuitive that an off-the-shelf solution would better meet the needs of a wholesale business than software that was custom-built. Ultimately, however, a third party developer will not have the same focused expertise as a dedicated vendor who understands their customer's core business and draws on the feedback of thousands of users to anticipate needs and iterate on their software faster.

Due to this kind of domain experience in wholesale, Handshake was able to better anticipate Bronx Shoes' needs. Case in point, van Tuijl was pleasantly surprised at how Handshake adapted to their workflow.

"With every issue that came up, [Handshake Director of Client Services] Aaron just said it wouldn't be a problem. I've found that the way we organize our customer pricing groups has always been a big issue, but Handshake is the first software company I've seen that can work with our complex pricing," he said.

Indeed, having worked with a vast array of wholesale brands across industries, Handshake has gained a deep understanding of the needs of wholesale sales reps, managers, and back office teams, and used those insights as the foundation of an intuitive, reliable, and scalable sales order management solution.

Want to learn more about how Handshake can customize to the needs of your business? Contact us today.

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"We've been using Handshake now for half a year, and we've seen more changes and improvements in the past few months than we saw in the eight years with our own custom solution."

Franklin van Tuijl
Director of Customer Service and IT,
Bronx Shoes