



HANDSHAKE

J.VROLA
INC

CASE STUDY

A Customized Sales Experience in Restaurant Distribution

How one leading meat distributor uses technology to enhance their tailored sales process.



J. Vrola Meats' buyers are top restaurants in the NYC metropolitan area.

J. Vrola Meat Company has decades of experience distributing custom cuts of meat in a constantly changing market—all while staying true to family traditions. Since 1947, Vrola has served restaurants, butcher shops, supermarkets, gourmet food markets, institutions, and hotels in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. In 2011, the company became part of the Porky Products family, one of the largest independent meat and seafood distributors in the country.

While Porky Products distributes to a large network of independent supermarkets, Vrola prides themselves on serving the customer who needs a quality, highly customized selection of meats. J. Vrola Meats has no minimum for buyers, so a large portion of their business is in supplying many smaller packages, which they deliver six days a week.

While specialty shops comprise a quarter of the J. Vrola Meats buyers, the majority of their customers are top restaurants in the New York City metropolitan area. One of the most fast-paced and competitive markets in the world, vendors serving the New York City restaurant market must differentiate with highly customized products and expert, advisory selling.

Restaurants have unique food distribution needs compared to the more predictable ordering of supermarkets and gourmet food shops. While Vrola's restaurant customers place standing orders consistently, modifications are often made based on short notice to accommodate special menus or the reactions of patrons to dishes from the night before. It also means that the chefs often call last minute with what products they need. What's more, Joseph Vrola notes, "The restaurant business is so fickle. One month it's hot; the other it's not."

Vrola turned to Handshake's mobile order writing solution, Handshake Rep, to cut operational costs, improve the level of strategic value his reps could offer his customers, and enhance the customized sales experience that Vrola's customers have grown to expect and love.

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We're a custom operation...our onsite butchers are guided by 'Center of the Plate' specialists to ensure accuracy in custom cutting.

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Joseph Vrola,
President of J. Vrola Meat Company



Vrola reps use the Handshake app to prepare for customer visits.

A More Tailored Sales Conversation

Despite much of Vrola Meat Company's buyer interaction taking place over the phone, sales reps maintain close relationships with customers with monthly in-person visits. These sales appointments ensure that reps meet the unique needs of each customer.

Before customer visits, reps prepare for their visit by reviewing their buyers' previous order history, most frequently ordered cuts of meat, and any special notes that were written on the customer's record. Reps then tailor the sales conversation to the buyer's specific needs. Vrola says of these visits: "When we walk in, we have a Handshake breakdown of everything the customer uses or what we think they use. We'll look up and see their order history. They'll say, 'One box,' and we'll let them know that, say, they haven't bought andouille sausage in two weeks. They'll say, 'Oh yeah, I'll buy that.' And then we can offer products that we think they need: 'Chicken breasts?' 'I'll buy that too.' It's an incredible selling tool."

Mid-appointment, Handshake Rep's customer-specific pricing feature ensures that sales reps and buyers are always looking at accurate pricing. Vrola Meat Company also utilizes a promotional strategy during the sales conversation where reps display a better pricing tier the customer could access given higher volume or product-specific buying. This tactic helps rep upsell to the benefit of both Vrola and their customer.

The Power of the Digital Catalog

J. Vrola's Meat Company's customized sales process has historically included physical samples, a staple in the meat industry. Because every product is custom-cut, each sample can cost the company between \$9-10. By showing the customer a digital catalog through Handshake, Vrola Meat Company can use fewer samples at each appointment. With high-definition images and descriptions included in their digital catalog on Handshake Rep, reps have been able to minimize the amount of samples provided at each sales appointment, significantly cutting costs.

Vrola's Customized Sales Process



1. Weekly phone consultations coupled with monthly in-person visits.
2. Tailored product suggestions based on review of order history.
3. Dynamic, in-app pricing strategy that encourage upsells.

Reps use sales data to offer strategic advice to their customers.

By letting the customer navigate through the digital catalog, reps can also let customers browse product options at their own pace. Vrola notes that this has helped customers gain a better understanding of the company's offerings: "We can let the customers shop as we're sitting with them. It shows how we custom-cut products."

In addition to powering a highly customized sales appointment, using a mobile ordering app allows reps focus on face-to-face interactions by eliminating the clutter of brochures, catalogs, and handwritten lists. "People aren't as interested when the sales rep is digging through paperwork," Vrola recounts. "Walking in with an iPad, the rep looks so intelligent. Handshake helps reps bring up the products so the customer can see them." No time is wasted on finding documentation related to a product of interest.

Advising Restaurant Industry Leaders

"We give advice to restaurants on what would make a great meal."

- Joseph Vrola,
President of J. Vrola Meat Company

With decades of experience in selling meat products, J. Vrola Meats is a well-regarded expert within the industry. Top New York restaurant chefs often call Vrola reps to consult on dish additions and special menus. In addition to expertise from time spent in the industry, Vrola Meat Company analyzes order history patterns and sales data across all their accounts to identify overall trends.

Because the manual and repetitive task of writing the order has been automated by Handshake, reps now use this sales data to offer strategic advice to their customers, enabling Vrola Meat Company to stay ahead of the competition and maintain their position as a leader in the food industry.



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Joseph Vrola,
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Standing out in restaurant distribution requires a customized sales process.

What's Next for Vrola

Expanding rapidly, Vrola is looking to implement Handshake's mobile customer ordering solution Handshake Direct Mobile. This allows them to further their commitment to a customized sales process and increase overall sales, given the ease at which restaurants and stores will be able to place small, frequent orders.

Mobile technology has helped Vrola keep a personal touch even as the company grows and delivers an ever-increasing number of orders. Facilitating an enjoyable buying experience—and giving rock-solid advice—is a win-win solution for both reps and restaurants.

Standing out in the competitive world of restaurant distribution requires a sales process customized to the needs of the buyer.

To find out how Handshake can help you win more business with a more tailored sales process, contact us today.

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Handshake's Impact



Higher order frequency and upsells.



Easier access to order history.



Less time spent on administrative tasks and more time spent advising customers.