

CASE STUDY

Driving Better Sales Management & Productivity with Mobile Technology

How international eyewear brand Silhouette uses mobile order entry software applications to optimize the front line of their business.



Silhouette reps build strategic customer relationships and educate the market on their products.

Founded in 1964, Silhouette International AG is an eyeglass manufacturer and distributor based in Linz, Austria that focuses on quality materials and distinctive, minimalist design. The company sells to independent opticians, optometrists, and ophthalmologists around the world, offering eyewear under both the Silhouette brand and as the exclusive licensee for Adidas eyewear.

Silhouette processes more than four million order lines annually.

Silhouette's global IT competence center implemented Handshake Rep and Handshake Hub in 2011 to drive the sales productivity of their global team and to digitize and automate core order entry processes.

Maximizing Sales Through Better Rep Productivity

Silhouette prides themselves on their high-end rimless frame product whose design and technology is unique in the market. To reinforce their competitive differentiation in the market, Silhouette likes to ensure their team is spending their time building strategic relationships and educating and training the market on their products.

US Regional Sales Manager, DezaRae Hedrick, describes this philosophy:

“I want my sales reps to be perceived as professional trusted advisors that are there for each and every opportunity to assist in growing their accounts' business. For anything that account needs, they're going to call my sales rep up and say, 'You're a great source of information, and I'm reaching out to you to help me out.’”

In the past, Hedrick and her fellow sales reps wrote sales orders on paper, requiring them to do up to three hours data entry after a long day on the road. So when Silhouette invested in Handshake Rep,

Silhouette®

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our order entry software, Hedrick quickly saw the benefits as both a sales rep and, eventually, as a manager.

“The extra time Handshake gives sales reps enables them to expand on any training opportunities, merchandising opportunities, any additional collections being sold in, and evaluations of existing collections”.

Ultimately, the way digital technology has helped these reps become business partners to their customers (as opposed to just order takers), is time--time to concentrate on strategic discussions, rather than the minutiae of writing an order.

A Better Sales Management Process

In fact, for Hedrick and Silhouette’s other sales managers, one of the greatest opportunities order entry software has presented to them is the ability to improve their sales management process and more effectively coach their sales teams. Here are a few ways they do just that.

Giving Reps What They Need to Succeed

Proper preparation prevents poor performance. An enormous factor in a sales rep’s success is the information they have access to during a typical sales appointment. The more data your sales rep has on hand, the more likely they’ll have a successful meeting.

When Hedrick was a sales rep herself, she would do much of this preparation work manually in advance. “I would...look at my handwritten notes from previous visits, remember everyone’s names, and try to see if there was a specific collection that I was supposed to be showing them.” She would also manually pull and print reports to see a customer’s order history, while also lugging in printed product catalogs, samples, and new release pages in a rolling suitcase.



Silhouette **sales reps** use Handshake to:

- Write orders more quickly
- Access buyers’ order history and visit notes
- Have more strategic conversations



Silhouette **sales managers** use Handshake to:

- Track sales activity
- Enforce operational processes
- Coach reps more effectively

Bringing Handshake & Infor AS Together



ERP System: Infor AS, Version 2.1

Data Flows: Customers, Products, Pricing, Orders, Inventory

Silhouette uses Infor AS version 2.1 for their ERP system in order to manage their global business with a single centralized system. Infor AS is a real-time planning system for globally active companies with multi-site capability and offers an almost complete suite of solutions around the ERP system.

In order to fully automate Silhouette's sales process and remove human handling of orders, it was critical that they connect Handshake to Infor's AS system. The successful integration project allowed Silhouette to effectively automate order entry and fulfillment process for hundreds of sales reps across the entire North American and European region, composed of 12 subsidiaries.

Getting business-critical data to the field

Like many suppliers realizing the power of bringing key business data, customer intelligence and product information online, Silhouette knew it was important to liberate this data from the ERP system and put it in the hands of their sellers.

To ensure accurate visibility of data for sales reps operating across markets, Silhouette elected to connect to Handshake's RESTful web-services API for the sync of product, pricing, multi-location inventory, customer information and addresses from Infor AS into Handshake. Connecting to Infor AS, a scheduled high frequency synchronization application allows for near real-time access to information as business-critical information changes. Silhouette also maintains a dedicated media server for rich product information including product catalog images, which are synced separately from the core product data.

The specific information for each country territory syncs to dedicated Handshake account instances to ensure the preservation of unique regional differences (including currency, language and price configurations) across markets.

Eliminating manual order entry and review

Noticing they were dedicating 1-3 people in each each subsidiary to handling manual data entry, Silhouette's goal was to automate sales rep order entry submission, as well as order processing by the customer service team.

To achieve this, Silhouette set up dedicated email inboxes for each of their international markets, to which sales reps would send the Handshake order confirmations from their iPads. Each Handshake order confirmation email includes a CSV attachment of the order information, and a simple script reads these attachments and queues them for instant insertion into the Infor AS system.

The integration script also monitors for a set of business rules and notifies the customer service team of exceptions, for instance, when an order discount exceeds a pre-defined level. If an order exception is noted, the order is queued for a quick manual review by the customer service team before being inserted into Infor AS.

Faster fulfillment. Happier customers.

Ultimately, end-to-end automation of the order fulfillment process allows Silhouette to streamline operations, get product to their happy customers more quickly, and expedite payment in the process.

Silhouette's partnership with Handshake has unlocked the true potential of their global sales team.

Today, Silhouette sales management trains their team on how to use customer order history, product intelligence, and customer-specific pricing accessible on sales reps' iPads, drastically cutting down the amount of manual prep work they need to do before an appointment. By giving sales reps everything they need on a mobile device, sales managers know that they can concentrate on what they do best: selling.

Tracking Incoming Orders and Providing Effective Coaching

Hedrick also uses Handshake to manage her sales team by tracking sales activity in real time. "I can actually look at orders as they're coming through, and if we have a new process, a new special way to order something, or a new set code and they're not using it, I can catch that mistake right away before it's even sent and well before it's even shipped," she says. This kind of tracking also helps her better coach sales reps. "I'm constantly looking at who's ordering and what they're ordering," says Hedrick. "I can call a rep and say, 'Hey, tell me how you're presenting this product.' It's a great tool to help troubleshoot and even enlighten my other sales reps to encourage them on sales with similar products."

Partnering with Handshake, Silhouette has helped unlock the true potential of their global sales team and streamlined revenue operations across the globe.

To better manage and empower your sales reps with mobile order entry software, contact Handshake today.

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