

SELL MORE

WITH SALES ORDER MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY



INTRODUCTION

GREATER EFFICIENCY MEANS MORE SALES

In the world of wholesale, maximizing your time with retail customers, both new and existing, is of premium importance to increasing sales numbers.

At store visits, retail buyers only have so much time budgeted for a meeting, putting pressure on reps to advise retailers and sell as much product as they can within those constraints. At trade shows, sales teams are not only battling a horde of competing brands, but also the speed with which retailers wind their way through the trade show floor, visiting dozens of vendors and giving each just a few precious minutes. There are only 24 hours in a day, and you have to make them count.

With sales running against the clock, increasing your effectiveness and efficiency is critical. Sales order management technology, which facilitates mobile order writing, is the tool to help you do just that. The resulting efficiency gains will yield more customer meetings, more orders, and increased customer satisfaction and retention, boosting sales over the long term. One order management software user saw 33% YOY growth in order volume. Another company was able to have their reps work faster at tradeshow and meet with more customers, resulting in a 47% increase in customer orders.

The days of writing orders by hand are gone. Browsing your catalog, zooming in on high-resolution product images, adding products to an order, and completing that order with an email confirmation can all be done in just a few taps. Read on to learn more about the different ways you can use sales order management software to significantly expedite your customer interactions and get big results.



SHOW UP PREPARED: MORE UPSELLS & BETTER PROPOSALS

As a sales rep talking to buyers in the field and at trade shows, you know that showing up informed, prepared, and efficient can make a huge impact on the size of your deal. Sales order management software can give you instant, real-time access to helpful order history reports, showing you a full record of your customers' past orders and lists of their most frequently ordered items.

Walking into a sales appointment prepared with this essential data increases your value-add, transforming your role from operational to strategic. You become the source of the most accurate, up-to-date order information, allowing you to control the direction of the conversation and become a partner in their success. Combine this with the time you save not having to look up details in the middle of a meeting, and you'll end up with bigger orders and happier customers.

Not only does reviewing your customer's file save you and your customer valuable minutes previously spent asking unnecessary questions, it also frees up extra time to sell them on items from your new line or suggested items based on their order history. On a tactical level, you should be setting specific sales goals for your retailers based on those past numbers, which will help you and your retailers stay focused on growth over time. With sales order management software, you'll be prepared to:

UPSELL BASED ON ORDER HISTORY

Knowing the details of your customer's frequently ordered items puts you at a huge advantage when it comes to upselling. Better prep on your end means making informed suggestions on new products. You can let your buyer know that their favorite bike helmet now comes in three new colors, or suggest that they order a similar shirt style in a higher quality material.

CREATE PRO-FORMA ORDERS IN ADVANCE

Creating powerful pro-forma orders with these order history insights can be the key to bigger orders and the addition of new products to a retailer's assortment--especially if you're managing a catalog that includes thousands of SKUs. Rather than overwhelming retailers by asking them to choose from your catalog, you can take a look at their past orders to understand what products might work for their store and present them with a suggested order of heavily curated items, which they can then easily edit and confirm with you.

Some brands using order management software also take the liberty of creating pro-forma orders for their regular customers ahead of trade shows. If you know what your customer is likely to order, it saves a lot of time to do most of the order writing work in advance. That way, you can simply pull out the order on the trade show floor for your customers to review, modify, and confirm. They'll appreciate the work you did ahead of time, and you'll appreciate the time you gained back to sell to other customers.

IDENTIFY POPULAR ITEMS TO RECOMMEND ACROSS MULTIPLE BUYERS

Knowing which items are popular amongst all your retailers gives you a unique opportunity to suggest these items across your buyer base. Note whether your retailers ordered specific products and close the loop on how well they sold. Hopefully your retailers will have helpful, qualitative, front-line feedback as well. This will help you identify the items that sold the best.

While of course geography and customer demographics are key factors that play into product popularity, you'll get more skilled at offering product suggestions that are a fit for several retailers. You'll have data on your side, with the ability to give them compelling sales numbers from other retailers who've had success with the product.



ACCESS A DIGITAL DATABASE & AN INTERACTIVE CATALOG

Sales order management technology serves as a replacement for your scattered customer database (business cards, phone contacts, a CRM, etc.) and your cumbersome paper product catalogs.

Rather than dragging a bunch of dead weight (in the form of product catalogs and samples) into your sales meetings, you'll have all that information at your fingertips, stored directly in your smartphone or tablet. Here's what you can do after digitizing that information:

HAVE ALL EXISTING CUSTOMER INFO ON HAND

Part of the one-time setup process of your order management software is uploading your customer information, including contact details, shipping addresses, and payment preferences.

This comes in handy especially when you're at a trade show and a lot of your business is coming from repeat customers. You can simply pull up their record and get started discussing products and writing new orders without having to collect mundane details like name, address, and phone number.

Even in cases where you're starting a new customer record, it's much faster (and less prone to errors) to enter the details into your order writing app than a handwritten order form. To bypass the process while with customers, just enter the customer's first and last name and snap a photo of their business card, leaving the rest of the details to fill in later.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A DIGITAL PRODUCT CATALOG

Fumbling through a paper catalog or sifting through physical samples of your products is a time suck and a hassle. Damaged paper catalogs look unprofessional, and they're often outdated as soon as they're printed.

Alternatively, zipping through your catalog with a few clicks and/or swipes is a much more efficient way of showing off your inventory. Having electronic access to your product line allows you to maximize your visit with a customer (with the major side benefit of making you look cool).

In some cases, trade show exhibitors follow customers around the booth and use a barcode scanner to instantly and accurately add products they like. This is not only a boon in terms of increased speed, it also means fewer distractions from the customer's purchase experience, which can translate to a bigger order.

The addition of rich, high-resolution images to your digital catalog can also be an enormous advantage when it comes to making more sales. When buyers have the opportunity to interact with your catalog, scrolling through your product categories and zooming in on images, they can be quickly introduced to new products they didn't know you had and make decisions to add them to their assortment.

► QUICK TIP:

Not fully ready to ditch your samples? Some sales reps use a hybrid approach, where they bring physical product samples of new or popular items that they want to show in person, while relying on the digital catalog for the rest.

SELL WITH UPDATED, ACCURATE INVENTORY INFORMATION

Having a reality check on your inventory numbers allows you to sell more strategically and saves you the time you may have previously spent calling your customer service team to see whether certain products were in stock. In the end, you'll be able to move available products out of your warehouses faster and deal with fewer backorders.

If you notice you are low or out of stock on certain items, you can give your buyer a heads up or steer them in a different direction. In cases where you write an order without having inventory intel, you might be slowed down having to call the office to check quantities before confirming an order. Worse yet, delivery (and payment) will be significantly delayed, leading to long cancellation windows and the threat of losing customers.



STREAMLINE THE ORDER WRITING & SUBMISSION PROCESS

Speeding up the order writing and submission step is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to take control of and accelerate the fulfillment process, which will ultimately speed up cash flow, build trust with customers, and nurture more sales in the future. Here's how you can use order management software to write and submit those orders faster than you ever did on paper:

CREATE QUICK RE-ORDERS BY DUPLICATING PAST ORDERS

Processing a re-order or replacing out of stock units should be quick and easy. The faster this is done, the more time you have to focus on selling additional products or showcasing new items. With order management software, you can simply copy a past order and send it out to retailers for confirmation.

Retailers want to trust that their vendors will be able to keep their inventory stocked at all times. Order writing speed translates to faster shipping, well-stocked shelves, and an overall increase in sell-through rates, which is good for them, and for you.



APPLY CUSTOMER-SPECIFIC PAYMENT TERMS AND DISCOUNTS AUTOMATICALLY

Let's face it. Not all your buyers are the same, and you may have different pricing guidelines for each of them. Keeping track of this information can be a total nightmare.

With order management software, customer-specific discounting and pricing terms for each individual customer will be automatically applied to every order, so there's no need to call your office headquarters to remind yourself of these details (or worse yet, wait until later to process the order). You can also quickly add a one-time discount. This significantly expedites pricing calculations and order completion.

SYNC YOUR ORDERS WITH BACK OFFICE SYSTEMS

Once you complete a sales visit, you may still be adding time to your busy day to look for a fax machine, call in/email the order to your customer service team, or manually re-enter the order into a back-end system.

This redundant data entry process wastes valuable time--time that could otherwise be spent visiting more customers and building relationships. Sales order management software can sync directly from the field to your back office, so you don't need to do the same thing twice.

If you have offline access to your order management tool, you can still browse the catalog and customer list and write orders even without wifi. That order will sync up automatically the next time you have internet access.

CONCLUSION

DRIVING MORE BUSINESS IN THE MODERN AGE

The world of wholesale is still largely an analog one--many businesses haven't let go of carbon paper order forms and catalogs, fax machines, and data entry staff. But that's rapidly changing, as B2B e-commerce and mobile sales software solutions take on a more prominent role in the wholesale landscape and business leaders begin to see the immense opportunities these solutions present.

According to Accenture, over $\frac{2}{3}$ of B2B suppliers plan to invest in omni-channel initiatives like B2B e-commerce platforms and mobile applications--all in response to the changing expectations of their customers.

Using sales order management software to build a more efficient sales team will lead to a much better experience for your retailers, and wholesale's winners and losers will be chosen based on this ability to raise the bar on service. Getting a jump on the competition now, as the digital transition begins to make its way through the marketplace, will mean more sales and bigger profits down the road.





ABOUT HANDSHAKE

Founded in 2010 and headquartered in New York City, Handshake is the leading sales order management platform for wholesale, supporting both global distributed sales teams and small to medium sized businesses. Handshake has raised \$9.5 million to date from notable investors including Emergence Capital and SoftTech VC.

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