

Inventory Display in B2B: 5 Things to Know

Inventory management, particularly, providing access to inventory levels, has always been an important component of selling in B2B. Fortunately, as B2B selling increasingly moves online, it has become much easier to give customers and sales reps greater visibility into the inventory data they need when placing orders.

Buyers that can view inventory availability while placing orders have a better customer experience, and suppliers that provide inventory availability can prevent backorders and improve order accuracy and fulfillment.

If you are a wholesale manufacturer or distributor selling B2B, here are 5 important things to know about displaying inventory data.

1 INVENTORY DATA CAN BE DISPLAYED IN MANY WAYS.

Inventory data refers to product availability information, and depending on your B2B selling process, you want flexibility to display this information in particular ways. Ideally, your B2B selling software allows you to notify your reps or buyers whether a product is in or out-of-stock, exact quantities of products that are available, and the date that the product will be available to ship. You should also be able to prevent your buyers from placing orders on items that are not in-stock.

2 INVENTORY DATA SHOULD BE DISPLAYED IN YOUR B2B DIGITAL CATALOG FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS AND YOUR SALES REPS.

Inventory data is often displayed alongside its corresponding images in a digital catalog, and is most useful in two scenarios. First, for your sales reps at an in-person sales appointment, on a mobile order writing application. If your reps know how much of an item is available to sell, they can suggest alternative products if necessary and better manage customer expectations overall. Second, for your buyer, in an online ordering portal on both web and mobile. Your buyer will be able to place orders based on availability, all without having to contact your customer service team.

3 INVENTORY VISIBILITY WILL DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BACK-OFFICE OPERATIONS.

When orders are submitted with full knowledge of product availability, they are more likely to be processed seamlessly. If your buyers and reps are able to access inventory information in a self-service portal, they won't need to email your customer service team with inventory-related questions. Many companies choose to redirect their back office staff to more strategic tasks once this burden has been lifted. Inventory visibility also provides your B2B customers with a buying experience that matches expectations that have been set in their personal lives, where they are accustomed to knowing whether products are in or out-of-stock.

4 INVENTORY DATA CAN BE PULLED IN TO YOUR B2B SELLING SOFTWARE VIA A NUMBER OF 3RD PARTY SYSTEMS.

In order to display your inventory data in your B2B digital catalog, you'll need to integrate data from your ERP, warehousing software, or inventory management system into your B2B eCommerce and sales rep ordering app software. Inventory data can be integrated manually, with the import and export of a spreadsheet, or automatically, with an API integration. If up-to-date inventory information is a critical part of your selling process, see point #5 below.

5 IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP INVENTORY DATA UP-TO-DATE.

The accuracy of inventory data is dependent on how regularly it is updated. Some manufacturers and distributors find it sufficient to manually update their inventory levels on a daily (or even weekly) basis. However, the only true way to achieve a real-time display of product inventory is with an API integration that connects the source of your inventory data with your commerce software, ensuring these two systems are always in sync.



Handshake provides the B2B Commerce platform for manufacturers and distributors that powers standout ordering experiences both in-person and online. Companies using Handshake transform their sales effectiveness and drive operational efficiency, delighting customers and growing lasting relationships.

Website: handshake.com | **Email:** info@handshake.com | **Phone:** 646.434.2553



Ordoro is an ecommerce app for managing shipping, inventory and everything in between. With an open API and integrations with all major marketplaces and shopping-cart platforms, Ordoro helps merchants streamline their shipping and inventory management across all their channels so they can focus on growing their business rather than maintaining it.

Website: ordoro.com | **Email:** info@ordoro.com | **Phone:** 512.271.9453