



CASE STUDY

Product Discoverability: Why B2B eCommerce Helps You Sell More

How leading eyewear distributor Walman Optical used B2B Commerce technology to drive increased product discoverability and larger orders.



For sellers who haven't shifted to digital methods, product discoverability can be more challenging.

For any B2B sales leader in manufacturing and distribution, getting products in front of buyers and ensuring an optimal product mix is a necessary, but challenging, part of the sales strategy. And for manufacturers and distributors that have not yet shifted to digital B2B selling, product discoverability is particularly difficult. Sales reps have to make the most of finite time in customer appointments and, without access to a digital catalog, must make tough choices when determining products to showcase. Product samples, for instance, must be able to fit in their bags or the trunks of their cars.

As for customers, they don't have the time to sift through huge paper catalogs, so they often stick to what they know: placing routine recurring orders back-to-back. Suffice it to say, these old methods make it nearly impossible for B2B buyers to see the breadth of their supplier's product offering and make informed purchasing decisions.

With the advent of B2B sales and ordering technologies for both sales reps and customers, these limitations have been fully lifted. Finally, B2B buyers and sales reps have easy access to browsable, comprehensive digital catalogs on web and mobile. Most importantly, manufacturers and distributors across all industries are finding that when the B2B customer can see their entire product line, they are more likely to discover new items to buy, resulting in bigger orders than ever before.

This case study is the story of how Walman Optical, the largest independent optical wholesaler in the U.S., reached a new level of product discoverability with Handshake's B2B ordering platform—bringing all their products online and in front of customers to drive larger orders.

Pre-Handshake Challenges: Inefficient Field Operations & Limited Product Visibility

Walman Optical works with several different lens and frame manufacturers, distributing their products to a client base comprised of largely independent eye practices around the U.S. As a result, they are able to offer an extremely diverse set of frames and lenses, and

Product Discoverability Challenges:

- ✗ Not enough time in appointments
- ✗ Too many products to highlight
- ✗ Limited space in sample bags
- ✗ Too much order writing, not enough cross-selling

eCommerce Solutions:

- ✓ Better use of time to sell
- ✓ Easy access to product information
- ✓ Quickly browse digital catalogs
- ✓ Effortless reordering, more focus on up-selling

With Handshake, Walman Optical reps can now walk customers through their comprehensive catalog on a tablet.

make it possible for eye care practices to choose exactly what fits best for their customers. Frame product manager Meg Klaers is responsible for the frame product mix at Walman Optical, which she develops based on various consumer, marketplace and regional trends. Additionally, Klaers must ensure the discoverability of her entire product line—starting with the nearly 30 sales reps in the field selling their products on a daily basis.

During sales visits, reps used to bring heavy bags overflowing with samples—often carrying up to 900 frames at a time—into small optical practices. Between digging through bags to find relevant products and fulfilling customer orders with paper and pen, reps could hardly find time to introduce new products. It was simply impossible for reps to showcase the entirety of Walman Optical’s product line; sample bags are too small and appointments are too short to give their impressive product mix the visibility it deserves. Klaers explains:

“Because we have so much frame product, we needed a better way to manage it, and that was the starting point for Handshake.”

Transforming the Walman Optical Rep Experience: Less Samples, More Selling

Since Walman Optical’s sister division ImageWear had seen such strong results using Handshake, Klaers decided to equip her sales team with Handshake Rep, a mobile order writing app designed to increase the efficiency of sales reps during in-person sales meetings. Given reps finally had access to Walman Optical’s entire product line through the Handshake Rep app, large sample bags were no longer needed to get products in front of customers. Instead, reps can now walk customers through Walman Optical’s comprehensive catalog on a tablet.

According to Klaers, “The energy that came from the launch of Handshake Rep has been incredible. Our sales reps can now sell directly from iPads and their sample bags are much lighter.” With Walman Optical’s entire product catalog at their fingertips, sales reps spend less time memorizing product descriptions and shuffling through duffle bags. With the time they’ve saved through more

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Meg Klaers
Frame Product Manager,
Walman Optical

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With Handshake Direct, customers could discover Walman Optical's entire product line, not just their four newest frames.

efficient appointments, reps are now able to utilize in-person visits to sell lab services—a much higher margin arm of their business.

Product Discoverability: The Opportunity of B2B eCommerce

Enabling sales reps to sell more during in-person client visits was just one aspect of Walman Optical's strategic multi-fold focus on revenue growth. Years before, in order to give their customers more of a self-service ordering option, Walman Optical had started a subscription service called Trusted Partners, sending auto-shipments of their four newest frames to participating eye care practices. Implementing an innovative subscription service promised to increase average order value for customers that opted in, giving them a BirchBox-like consumer experience, but Klaers started to realize their customers required a more tailored approach.

After processing too many product returns, it became apparent that customers desired the ability to discover and select frames themselves—a clear call for B2B eCommerce. From Klaers' perspective, it did not matter whether the Trusted Partners boxes contained new products or handpicked frames, as long as customers stayed in the subscription program. Subsequently, she recognized the importance of online ordering to remain competitive in the eyewear distribution industry. Says Klaers:

“The wholesale optical industry is ready for online ordering. We need a platform that allows us to keep up with the big players in the industry.”

Klaers realized that Handshake Direct, Handshake's B2B eCommerce product, was not only the key to remaining competitive, but also to turning their subscription program around.

Walman Optical's Subscription Box Service:



Before Handshake Direct:
Auto-shipment of new products, too many returns



After Handshake Direct:
Custom-curated boxes, happy buyers

After implementing Handshake, Walman Optical saw revenue growth in their frame business for the first time in years.

Winkit & B2B eCommerce: More Personalized Buying, Less Returns

Handshake Direct is an eCommerce portal that enables B2B buyers to search and select products online and through a mobile app, wherever they are. Rolling out Handshake Direct at Walman Optical not only served as a replacement for outdated ordering processes—typically placed over the phone or through email—it also corresponded with a total rebrand of their subscription program. With a new name, Winkit, and more modern, updated aesthetic, Walman Optical’s subscription program was brought back to life.

With self-curated online ordering, customers were now able to custom-build their own Winkit subscription boxes with frames that would sell in their practices, rather than receiving the default box of products they often wanted to return. And as a result of the highly customized buying experience with their Handshake Direct powered Winkit portal, Walman Optical saw revenue growth in their frame business for the first time in several years: an uptick of 5% in units compared to the same months in the previous year. According to Klaers, this is completely attributed to online ordering through Handshake Direct, explaining that “the only thing that changed for us over this time period was Winkit.”

Walman Optical also made full use of Handshake’s custom-branding and design tools to position their products in the best possible light for their customers. In addition to custom-branding their Handshake Direct customer portal, Walman Optical adopted an omnichannel marketing approach to raise awareness and acquire new Winkit customers. Walman Optical shared the news of their B2B eCommerce portal launch with their strong network of social media followers, reinforcing the Winkit brand in every post. The launch was also announced to their email database of existing customers and prospects. To drive adoption of their portal, first-time Winkit users receive a 25% discount off their first order. Sales reps were also incentivized to spread the news about Winkit; Walman Optical challenged and rewarded sales reps to get customers using the portal to place orders.



The wholesale optical industry is ready for online ordering. We need a platform that allows us to keep up with the big players in the industry.



Meg Klaers
Frame Product Manager,
Walman Optical



After Handshake:
6% increase in units sold

Average order value has increased since Walman Optical started using Handshake.

Within the first few months of Winkit's launch, over 500 customers registered and placed orders for over 4,000 frames—resulting in an immediate increase of 5% in revenue. The overwhelming response and powerful results that followed confirmed that Walman Optical's strategic decision to implement B2B eCommerce was the right choice for their business.

Post-Handshake Success: Bigger, Customer-Driven Orders

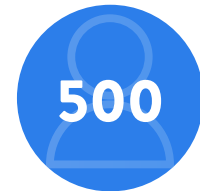
Empowering their sales reps and customers with Handshake has made a world of difference for Walman Optical. What was once an ineffective process has been transformed into a truly revenue-boosting exercise. The increased product discoverability that Handshake's Commerce platform has afforded Walman Optical's reps and customers has fueled an increase in average order values and positioned the brand as a supplier of choice. Walman Optical's customers are no longer beholden to auto-shipments of new products and whatever frames their reps could manage to fit into their bags. Their entire product catalog can now be found on or offline, directly in buyers' hands.

According to Klaers, buyers are happier than ever:

“Customers have done nothing but thank me since Handshake was rolled out. There has been only positive feedback.”

In addition to being able to discover the products their patients want, optical practitioners now have a direct link to Walman Optical's back office through Handshake. Same day ordering has also sped up fulfillment and shipping, as Walman Optical can now get orders out the door up to 50% faster than before. In implementing a fully digital ordering process, Walman Optical has transferred the benefits onto their customers and unveiled the brand's full product and service offering.

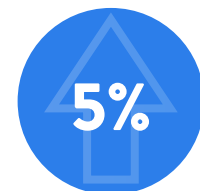
Results After Handshake Direct Launch:



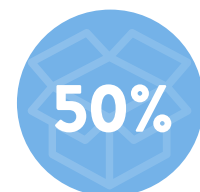
Customers Registered



Frames Ordered



Revenue Increase



Faster Delivery

Customers show their appreciation by placing bigger orders.

Product Discoverability: Giving Your Buyers More Control

Whether it's through your own dedicated B2B eCommerce portal or an app with your full digital catalog accessible to your sales reps in the field, digital B2B selling is what drives better product discoverability in 2018. The B2B buyer that can view your entire offering, browsing and discovering products in a self-curated way, is not only a more valuable customer, but is more likely to order from **you** than your competitors.

To get more products in front of your B2B customers and increase your average order size, contact Handshake today.

Email: info@handshake.com
US Toll Free: +1 (855) 532-9044
International: +1 (646) 434-25533



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