

INSIDER'S GUIDE

Get your brand in retail stores

5 wholesale cheat codes for B2B growth



This guide is your one-stop resource, bringing together industry insights and insider tips from wholesale leaders at **SPANX**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Saks Fifth Avenue**, and more.



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INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, brands have doubled down on their wholesale strategy as a vital source of sustainable growth. The high-margin, low-cost category accounts for **60%** of total company sales, according to NuORDER by Lightspeed's latest [State of B2B Commerce](#) report. Digital maturity is also on the rise, with as many as **3 in 4 brands** now using B2B software to modernize the wholesale distribution process.

Success in wholesale depends on getting in front of new retailers and deepening existing partnerships. But brands are struggling to make these moves effectively in the new hybrid B2B landscape. Success is no longer linear, with hundreds of consumer variables and digital touchpoints to consider. Plus, buyers are inundated with more messages than ever, forcing sellers to get crafty in how they market product lines.

How can you make your brand stand out in a sea of options, season after season?

This guide is your one-stop resource, bringing together industry insights and insider tips from wholesale leaders at **SPANX**, **Bloomingdale's**, and **Saks Fifth Avenue** to help brands:

- + Craft a compelling product narrative
- + Future-proof B2B marketing plans
- + Sell deeper into existing accounts
- + Thrive in the era of digital wholesale
- + Get in front of the *right* new retailers

Lead with unique brand stories

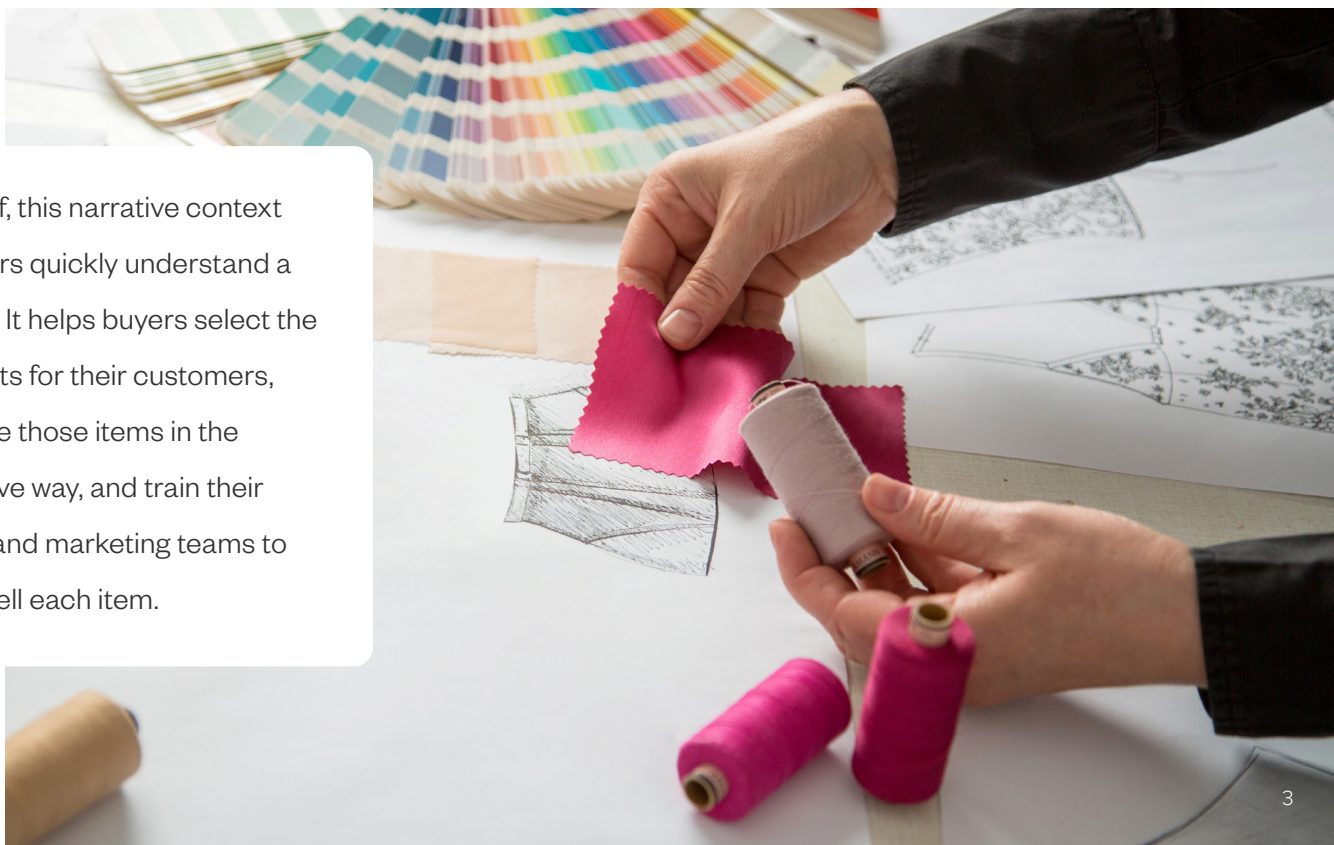
Whether you're an established name looking to deepen retail relationships, or an emerging shop breaking onto the wholesale scene, telling your **brand story** is key to success. Reflecting on the past, present, and future of your brand helps retailers (and ultimately consumers) identify with your values and mission.

INSIDER INSIGHT

As a buyer for the women's contemporary collection at **Saks Fifth Avenue**, **explains**:

"I'm able to go through linesheets on my own, but I'm looking for brands to provide that *context*. Inspiration slides, information on how the collection came together, a rail mocked up of how they envision it in their retail store. Having all of those elements is really important."

Far from fluff, this narrative context helps retailers quickly understand a given brand. It helps buyers select the best products for their customers, merchandise those items in the most effective way, and train their employees and marketing teams to effectively sell each item.





The power of narrative



Market differentiation

As competition increases, brands can't compete on quality alone. A compelling product narrative, including origins and inspirations, encourages retailers to sell your brand, and builds a sustainable edge as product fads come and go.



Dynamic buying cycles

With faster product trends, seasonal collections matter less than a consistent brand narrative that can support orders in-market and throughout the calendar year.



Point-of-sale conversions

To improve sell-through rates, effectively tell your story across in-person stores and online storefronts. Empower retailers with convenient access to relevant brand assets, merchandising displays, and messaging.



Tailored to shopper personas

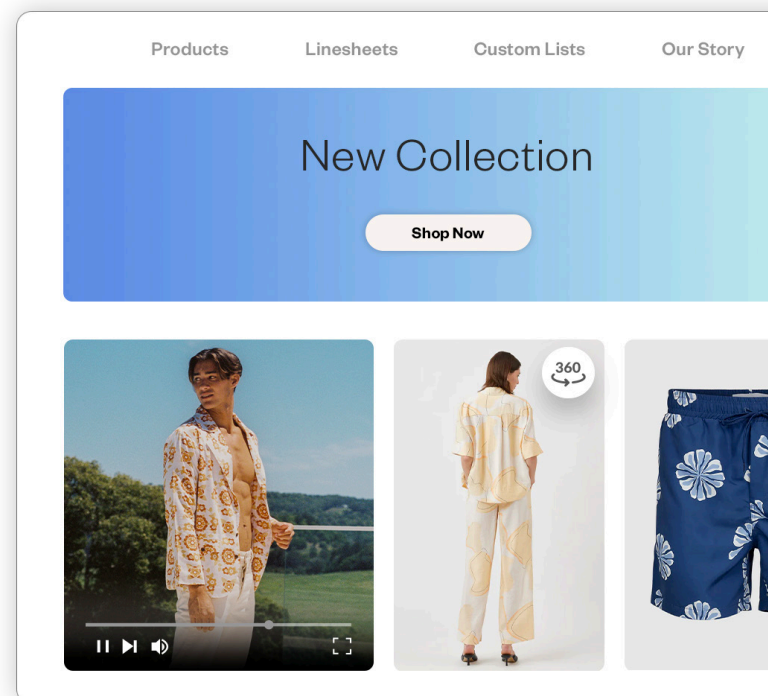
In some cases, your brand story might be less about your product and more about the specific type of "shopper" that it caters to, from busy moms to outdoor enthusiasts. This positioning helps retailers merchandise your product for maximum sell-through.

Essential storytelling tools

Unique, updated homepage

Build an attractive, fully-branded, multimedia experience that leaves old-school wholesale portals in the dust and features your latest product collections. This website is often your first impression to retail buyers and the most important digital real estate in bringing your products to life.

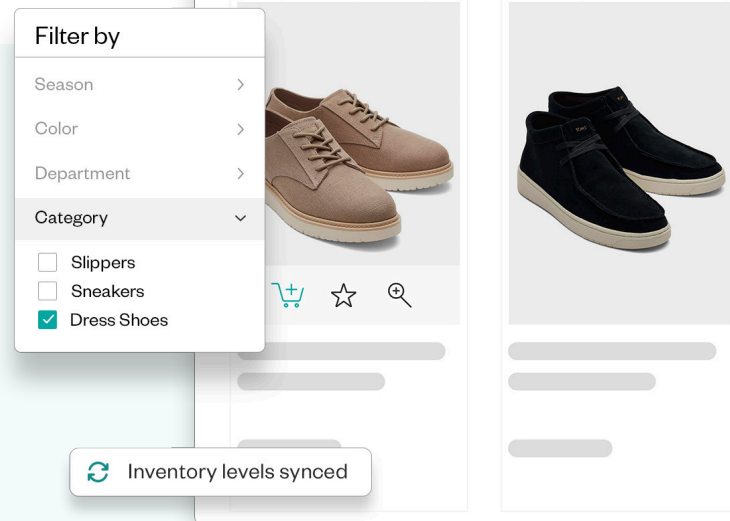
Learn more: [5 Ways to Bring Your Homepage to Life](#)





Digital linesheets

Swap paper forms and clunky spreadsheets with a [B2B commerce solution](#) that provides a B2C-like checkout experience. Offer customized linesheets and catalogs by category, price point, and other factors, updated with accurate data to avoid delays or errors.



Personalization at scale

Provide hyper-curated assortments based on store, region, or other key factors. Italian brand **ISAIA** tailors merchandise by local trends, focusing casual wear (e.g., denim, joggers) around vacation destinations and formal attire in major cosmopolitan outposts.

Learn more: [How ISAIA Blends Art and Science in Merchandising](#)



“Behind-the-scenes” content

Humanize your brand with glimpses into the backstory of each collection. Feature interviews with designers and makers that explain the manufacturing process and what makes your products unique.

Consistent brand messaging

Recognize that wholesale buyers are as digitally-savvy as retail consumers. Deliver B2B messaging that aligns with your B2C-facing story, and maintain consistent art and creatives across channels.



SPOTLIGHT

How SPANX™ entices B2B buyers

With the recent rise of remote work, popular underwear and lifestyle brand [SPANX™](#) noticed a shift in favor of digital buying options, especially among tech-savvy boutique store owners and buyers. The team used B2C content to develop a new B2B commerce portal, offering retailers a premier shopping experience that is consistent with their consumer brand story. Now, campaigns drive up to [96% conversion rates](#) among top accounts.

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Market beyond the trade show

While market weeks and trade shows were once the be-all-end-all for getting in front of retailers, the tides have shifted. Brands are moving away from the big national shows to regional trade events to be more cost-effective and tactical. And, according to NuORDER by Lightspeed's [2024 State of B2B Commerce](#) report, retailers are leaning most on rep-driven email and outbound marketing as their preferred methods of communication.

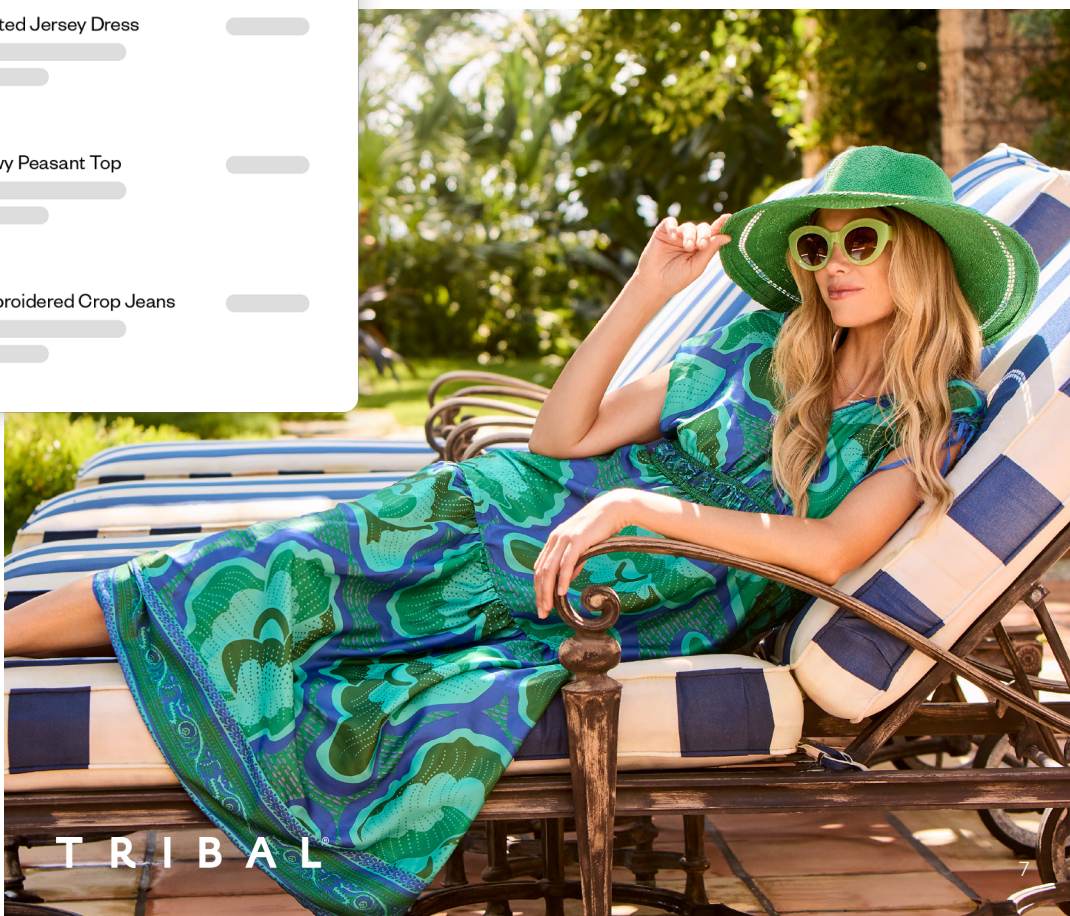
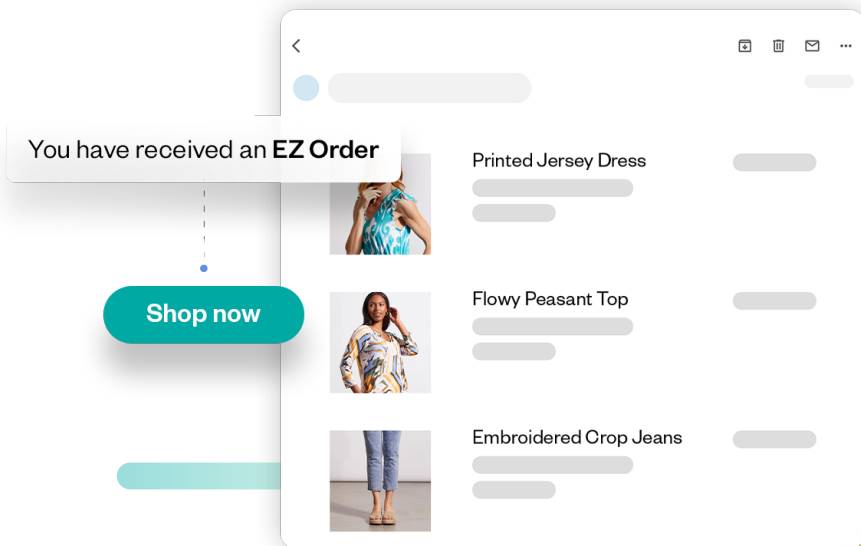


Empower sales reps with email superpowers

To break through the flood of emails and calls, sales reps need to provide ease and convenience. One-to-many email lists don't offer the personalized touch that buyers now expect. Sweating the details, such as updating linesheets to reflect local currencies or ensuring that inventory data from local warehouses is up-to-date, can drive outsized gains (as [Tribal Sportswear](#) learned when its orders soared after implementing both changes).

Embedded shopping functionality (such as [EZ Orders](#)) further streamlines the experience for retailers, allowing them to shop and buy in one click from within their inbox. Brands can sort buyers, send tailored product assortments (based on profiles or past interactions), and track emails as [Campaigns](#) with real-time analytics on open rates, clicks, and conversions.

Pro tip: Enable sales reps with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) content that proactively addresses common questions or misconceptions from buyers, product benefits and differentiation points, and more.



Develop a variety of marketing touchpoints

As wholesale buyers increasingly shop and buy online, brands need to nurture a new playbook of marketing tactics to stay top of mind. Here are a few high-impact touchpoints to get started:

+ **Social media presence**

Build a feed on your audience's platform of choice, partner with key influencers on product campaigns, and share positive press and company news.

+ **Syndicated content**

Consider creating exclusive broadcast channels for wholesale content so buyers can feel "in the know" without having to leave their favorite applications.

+ **Email signatures**

Turn the valuable real estate beneath every email communication into a billboard for your latest products, line sheets, and campaigns.

+ **Word of mouth**

Nurture a cult-like following among your retail customers, encouraging them to advocate for your brand among colleagues and friends and at trade events.

Make your brand as "real" as possible

Leverage the power of advanced media formats to bring your brand to life across channels. These experiences help your brand stand out, while giving buyers a more intimate sense of your story and product design.

INSIDER INSIGHT

As a buyer for the women's modern collection at **Bloomingdale's**, [explains](#):

"Whatever brands can do to make it feel like you're there, even if you're not, has been very helpful. What's great about [a B2B commerce solution like] NuORDER is you can shop the entire rack, hover over the picture, it will take you directly to the style, and you can just add it to your cart — and it just makes for a seamless experience overall."

**Examples of new media formats:****3D images & showrooms**

Build immersive virtual storefronts, curated for each buyer

Shoppable video

Turn runway shows and product clips into clickable goods

360° photography

Give buyers the best possible view of true size and fit

Fabric photos

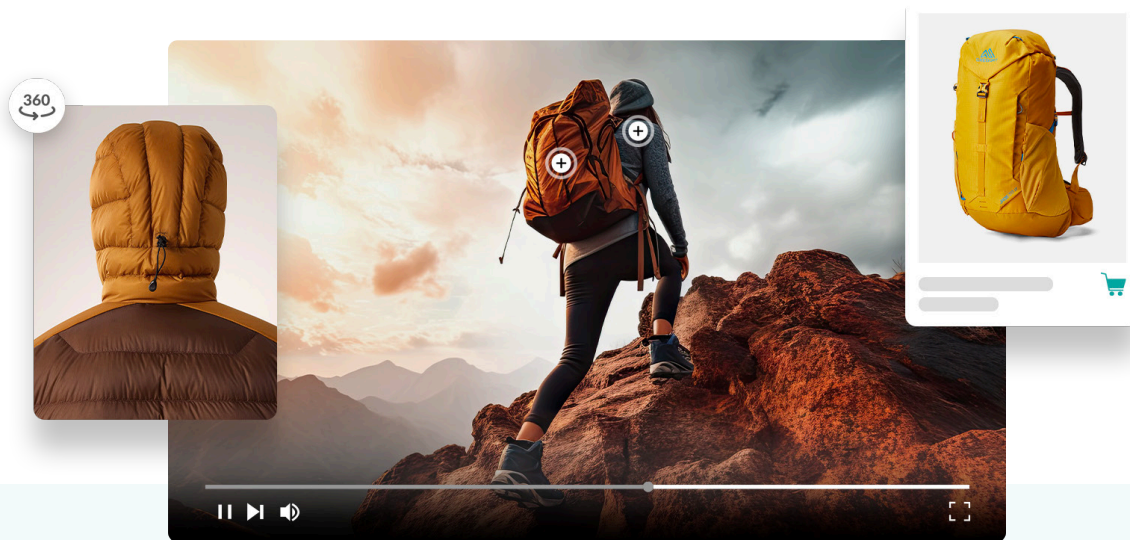
Provide up-close detail into quality, color, and texture

Social & press

Display recent media clippings and the voice of your customer

Certifications

Clearly label your products (e.g. organic, sustainable, vegan)



03

Focus on ideal-fit retail partners

The best retail partners are those who understand and appeal to your target audience. They should believe in your brand mission and be willing to give the relationship time to grow. As macro factors remain uncertain, retailers are purchasing more conservatively, and brands must look to diversify their distribution through specialty and regional retailers.

Don't skip on your homework

Be picky when it comes to finding new partners, as they'll be your collaborators in getting your product into the hands of the public. A mismatched retailer can undo years of hard work and meticulous detail invested into building your brand. Thoroughly research each partner's reputation, sensibilities, footprint, target consumer, purchase terms, and digital maturity.

Try to answer questions like:

- ☐ Does the retailer have an attractive and functional website?
- ☐ If they're solely brick-and-mortar, how are their stores merchandised?
- ☐ What are customers saying about them on popular review sites and social media?
- ☐ What kind of data do they provide to their vendors? What do they require?
- ☐ Are there any signs the business is struggling financially?
- ☐ Do they have customers that would find your products appealing?
- ☐ Does the retailer's brand align with our own brand values?

Balance online and offline channels

The right wholesale partnerships can rapidly expand your pool of customers, but you also want to be careful not to cannibalize revenue lines. Diversify your footprint of online-only retailers as well as physical department stores, and make sure your DTC website isn't competing with retailers by offering exclusive inventory in your own storefronts.

Help retailers differentiate their merchandise

Be consultative when suggesting assortments, keeping in mind local retailers who stock your product in a region or market. For instance, a store won't want to carry the same items as a competitor a few blocks away, but they will still want to curate frequently purchased products. Suggest balanced buys that cater to local tastes, but also provide a differentiated shopping experience.



Consider the tradeoffs of scale

While major retailers offer sizable benefits, these prized channels also come with higher costs. Smaller retailers are more aligned with the human experience shoppers [increasingly seek out](#) these days. Plus, a modern [B2B commerce platform](#) enables brands to work with specialty retailers at scale, with the help of streamlined order management, [virtual showrooms](#), [automated payments](#), and access to global wholesale marketplaces.



Learn to do business their way

Understand retailers' ordering and replenishment cycles, so you can deliver on a schedule that's ideal for them and capture a greater wallet share. Make sure sales reps know which stockists are a good fit for your brand, with higher sell-through averages. Differentiate not only your products but also the way you deliver and package those items to meet their unique needs.

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Become a data-driven partner

Beyond great products, buyers are looking for strong [brand/retail partnerships](#) that can withstand the market turbulence of consumer whims or supply chain disruptions. Brands can solidify their place as a strategic partner by tapping into the wealth of data at your fingerprints, and coming prepared with the right, up-to-date product information.



Identify bestsellers and trends

Analyze your sales reports to spot bestsellers and discover category-specific trends. Become a demand expert by using data to understand when emerging trends will hit critical mass, or begin to wane. Continually assess performance to identify the most promising categories and SKUs for wholesale clients.

Customize your product distribution

A one-size-fits-all approach is the fastest way to lose wholesale partners. Tailored merchandise assortments based on region, season, demographics, consumer segment, and other key variables increase sell-through rates and minimize retailer returns.

Pro tip: For in-person locations, provide high-quality imagery and display items (e.g., kiosks, stands, boxes) that they can use to merchandise products.

Pro tip: Offer exclusive product listings or color options to a few of your most-valued wholesale clients, and watch them push your brand throughout the year.

Send personalized campaigns

Nurture your retailers with [dynamic email distribution lists](#) that cater messages based on their latest needs and demand. The more tailored your line sheets and presentations, the higher your odds of conversion, bigger average order values (AOVs), and increased loyalty.

SPOTLIGHT

Maurizio Mykonos fuels 24/7 sales

Looking to expand its consumer base beyond Europe, luxury fashion brand [Maurizio Mykonos](#) also saw an opportunity to boost year-round profitability. Without an “always-on” B2B commerce platform, brands often experience major dips in revenue outside of major market weeks and trade shows. Now, the team uses a [digital B2B presence](#) to rise above slower months and seasonal fluctuations, driving year-round relationships with U.S. buyers, who use the wholesale portal for mid-season replenishments and a-la-carte orders.



MAURIZIO

Find a scalable B2B commerce platform

To tap into the full potential of digital wholesale, you need to find the right tools and technology partners. You can accomplish much of the above with the right [B2B commerce platform](#) that brings all your sales, inventory, and marketing data in one place, and includes foundational capabilities such as:



Robust integrations with systems you're already using (e.g. point-of-sale, accounting)



Broad ERP support for systems including SAP, NetSuite, Dynamics, Oracle



Rich media experiences like video and interactive to bring your products to life



Easy check-out with B2C-like linesheets, carts, and order forms



Advanced automation in process management and order data entry



Tailored product data to sync with retailers' category label specifications



Network effects to rapidly scale your brand profile and build relationships

Getting internal teams, as well as both sellers and buyers, all working off the same platform and data creates win-wins throughout the wholesale value chain. Brands make better marketing decisions, retailers stock more relevant products, and consumers benefit from a richer canvas of choices at more locations.

Ready to get in front of more retailers?

Don't wait until next season to put these tips into practice. [NuORDER by Lightspeed](#) is the wholesale eCommerce platform providing brands access to over **500K** retailers, with **120** software integrations, in **100** global markets. Our B2B platform enhances the buying process with realtime inventory updates, valuable data and insights, and tools to support every department.

[Talk to someone on our team](#)