Eliminating the Complexities in Wholesale Processes with OMS+ia from DataXstream

Much has changed in the past few years for industries and sectors across the globe, and wholesale distribution is no exception. The global supply chain has been in a state of flux as organizations struggle to keep products on the shelves due to shipping delays, manufacturing delays, and changes in supply and demand. And although supply chain burdens are easing, organizations are still dealing with the effects of supply chain uncertainty.

Adding to those complications, the inability to shop normally led many organizations to bypass independent distributors in favor of creating their own operations. While this in some ways solved an immediate problem, it also resulted in disrupting the wholesale distribution process. With consumers buying directly from the brands they love, wholesalers were left unsure of their future in the global marketplace.

Still, there are signs that things may be shifting. While 2021 was full of uncertainties for wholesalers, the market is expected to grow in 2022, and overall is predicted to hit more than **$64 trillion** by 2025. In fact, **research from the World Trade Organization shows that 15 to 25 percent** of global trade will shift in the next five years while companies look for more local and/or reliable suppliers and distribution partners. That means the pressure is on for wholesale distribution partners, who are going to have to be able to offer fast, agile, nimble, and reliable partnerships. Being able to work efficiently will be key to survival as wholesalers navigate the competition. And to add to the complexity, wholesale distributors will need to do all of these things while also keeping in mind greater focus on and pushes toward sustainability, which both governments and customers are clamoring for.

In light of these changes, we believe that now is the time for organizations to identify wholesale distribution challenges that could be causing costly delays and develop a strategic plan moving forward with the technology solutions that can help.

Here is a look at some of the common challenges wholesale distributors face, some technology solutions that can help address those challenges, and the benefits that are possible as a result.

Challenges in the Wholesale Sales Process

On the global level, the wholesale distribution industry is facing many challenges. But the industry itself is also filled with day-to-day challenges that make remaining profitable and efficient challenging. They include:

Complex quoting process. The quoting process within wholesale distribution is incredibly complex. Large orders can often be hundreds of lines long, and in many cases customers have modified with different names for products, scratched out items, and the like. Identifying the right products and pulling together the necessary information can take days. Added to that, depending on special partnerships or negotiated discounts, pricing may be different for every unique customer. In addition, numerous different locations and suppliers could be involved in every order, adding to complexity.

Labor intensive manual processes for orders 500-1000+ lines. As noted above, the act of entering orders into one's system is an incredibly time-intensive and manual process. Creating quotes at the beginning of the sales process can take days. And unfortunately for wholesalers, by the time a quote is created, in some instances customers could've already chosen to work with someone else.

Speed and agility are of the essence today more than ever before, and that is an ability that many wholesalers lack.
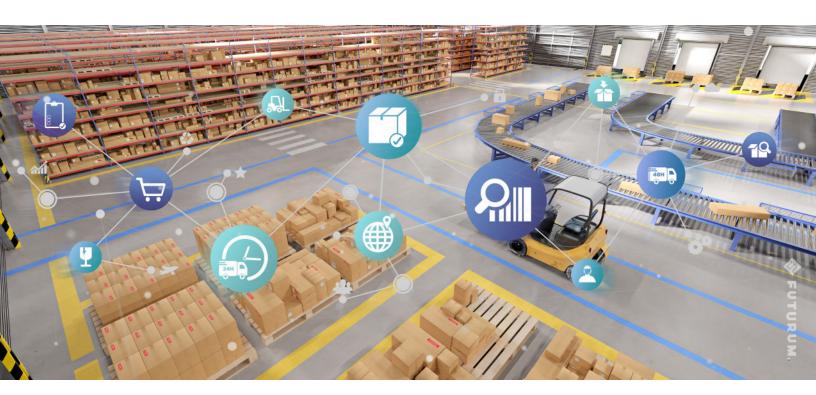
Keeping inventory up to date. Because wholesale distributors work with such a diverse group of customers, suppliers, logistics providers, etc., inventory management can be difficult. Effectively and efficiently serving customers at their moment of need requires distributors to have real-time inventory insights at their fingertips. But disjointed and fragmented systems often make that impossible, leading to disappointment on the part of customers and lost profits on the part of distributors themselves.

Complexities with PDF and digital orders. Our world is becoming increasingly digital, but wholesalers are struggling to keep up. Antiquated processes that require digital and PDF orders to be re-entered manually, create even longer backlogs.

Organizations working with limited resources. Every organization today is working with limitations. Whether it's time, staffing resources, or money, wholesalers are often struggling to keep up. Efficiency is a must in the current supply chain environment.

Eliminating the Complexities in Wholesale Processes with OMS+ia

These challenges sound daunting, and if you're a wholesaler you're probably nodding in agreement. But the good news is that they don't have to be. It's possible to mitigate or even eliminate some of these difficulties by turning to technology. That's what led us to evaluate OMS+ia by DataXstream. OMS+ia is an order management system that uses hyperautomation to rapidly identify and automate multiple pieces of the wholesale ordering process. This intelligent automation enables wholesalers to offer customers the fast, reliable service that they need. Here is a look at the main benefits that we have identified:

Material search made easy. DataXstream's enterprise-grade search engine leverages advanced data science and machine learning to transform, match, rank, and provide search results for business users and customers, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of quotes in a seamless manner. For example, customer quotes often don't match the product name exactly. OMS+IA knows this and searches for similar product terms. The average mismatch between customer query and SAP data is 60 to 70 percent and in what we find almost mind-blowing from a capabilities standpoint, the OMS+ia bundle reduces this error to 5 to 10 percent.

Order processes no matter the format. OMS+ia can analyze orders whether they are in PDF format, written by hand, crossed out, or even on colored paper. The IA can read the information, determine its relevance to the order, and label it for easy reference in the future to ensure that quotes are fast and consistent for every customer. OMS+ia technology leverages machine learning to quickly find materials, increasing order processing efficiency by an impressive 98%. Intelligent order creation (iOC), one of the features included in the suite,

automates order requests reading and sorting relevant information to auto-generate customer orders. It automatically matches customer and material information with the data of record in your ERP system, auto-populating an order with the matched data, saving tremendous amounts of time.

Create quotes faster. The solution uses a customer's ERP data to find material, customer, inventory, and other supply chain data to automatically generate orders, quotes, reports, and other documents. With its automation tools, sales teams can return quotes and bids 90 times faster— likely faster than their competitors, which results in increased business.

Improved customer experience. Improving customer experience is the name of the game for every organization. With OMS+ia, wholesalers can improve operational efficiencies and reduce costly errors. By doing so, customers can receive products faster.

Works wherever sales associates are. OMS+ia is built on SAP's Business Technology Platform and easily integrates into existing SAP systems. It is designed to work on a variety of systems and devices so sales associates or customer service representatives can use it wherever they are.

Extracting information from data. A lot of power lies in data. OMS+ia uses the data orchestration layer of SAP's Business Technology Platform,

allowing organizations to glean insights directly from live data. Having immediate access to the data enables organizations to be more agile and react quickly to changing business and market environments.

Improving Wholesale Sales Processes is Table Stakes

The global marketplace is in a state of transformation. Wholesalers are facing a myriad of challenges as they continue to navigate our new post-pandemic reality. To win business, it's critical that wholesale distributors are able to provide quotes quickly and accurately, can keep solid stock of their inventory in real time, and keep their respective corner of the global supply chain moving. Doing so will lead to improved efficiency and, ultimately, increased customer satisfaction, which in turn will drive greater loyalty, sales, and profitability. Given the reality of thin operating margins, we can't see a better time to tackle these issues.

That's where the value proposition of DataXstream OMS+ia comes in — it solves all of these challenges and gives the wholesale sales team the benefit of real-time inventory and insights to provide the highest level of customer experience. OMS+ia, available on SAP Store, is a must-have for any wholesale distributor operating in the current marketplace.