

Increase Your Selection Without Owning Additional Stock

How often do customers ask you for a product that you don't carry? My bet is that this happens pretty regularly. You probably look up the request in the Beverage Journal so you can give your customer a price based on the current frontline. Often you know the product and for one reason or another have decided not to carry it, but are probably willing to special order a case. Delivering this extra service can build customer loyalty and repeat business.

Online it is harder to create these opportunities as potential customers can easily jump to a competitor's website to find a product you don't carry. With so many stores within easy reach it becomes critical to keep your customers' attention

on products they expect to find on your site. Suggesting that customers "Email us a request" usually turns up queries for products that are unavailable, but what if you could show customers products that you can special order for them? Presented with the product they want at a competitive retail price, they needn't shop around. You have increased your selection and created an extra sale without owning additional stock.

We call selling wholesalers' products on your website **Virtual Inventory**, and it gives you access to everything listed in the Beverage Journal. Using our eStage software you select the products you want to display online, you then mark them up from the frontline case price before uploading them to your site. Using Virtual Inventory you become limited only by the availability of products from wholesalers in your market. To increase your confidence in that availability, selected wholesalers provide daily or weekly updates of items that

are available for sale.

Is it practical to list everything in the market on your website? Probably not, as your online strategy should include ways you differentiate yourself from the competition. Having the ability to sell everything in the market shouldn't be confused with having a strategy for your website, but it can be a powerful tool to help implement your strategy.

Let's say you plan for your website to become a destination for Australian wine. You may already have a large selection in stock, but it doesn't make

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sense to buy in everything from Australia on the market. Using Virtual Inventory you can now enhance your website with wholesalers' listings, giving your customers

access to everything you want to sell. This sends a powerful message to customers that you really are a destination for Australian wine and that they don't need to go anywhere else to find what they're looking for.

Virtual Inventory can help you build customer loyalty and repeat business by collecting special orders on your website. It can also help you map out a strong position online that separates you from the crowd.

The Beverage Network offers one of the most complete liquor industry e-commerce systems. It combines the POS tool **eStage** with product labels, tasting notes and ratings. Each website is unique but benefits from access to the largest database of wines and spirits in the US. Stores can select from wholesaler listings to dramatically enhance product selection.

To learn more about how the Beverage Network can help with a website for your store including POS integration and Virtual Inventory contact Ian Griffith at ian@bevmedia.com or call (212) 571-3232 or visit bevnetwork.com/retailweb.