

elastic

Enhanced Assets Best Practices Guide

Boost Virtual B2B Sales with Sales
Assets & Brand Storytelling



The growth of digital merchandising technology continues to transform the brand-to-retailer sales process. Incremental sales growth, cost savings and greater sustainability come not only from digital catalogs, but also from virtual merchandising, assortment planning, streamlined order entry and more strategic sales planning. And key to optimizing the entire wholesale ecommerce process is to virtually showcase products through the use of enhanced digital assets.

This guide outlines enhanced digital asset best practices while drawing upon Elastic Suite's experience in serving hundreds of the world's largest and most innovative brands.

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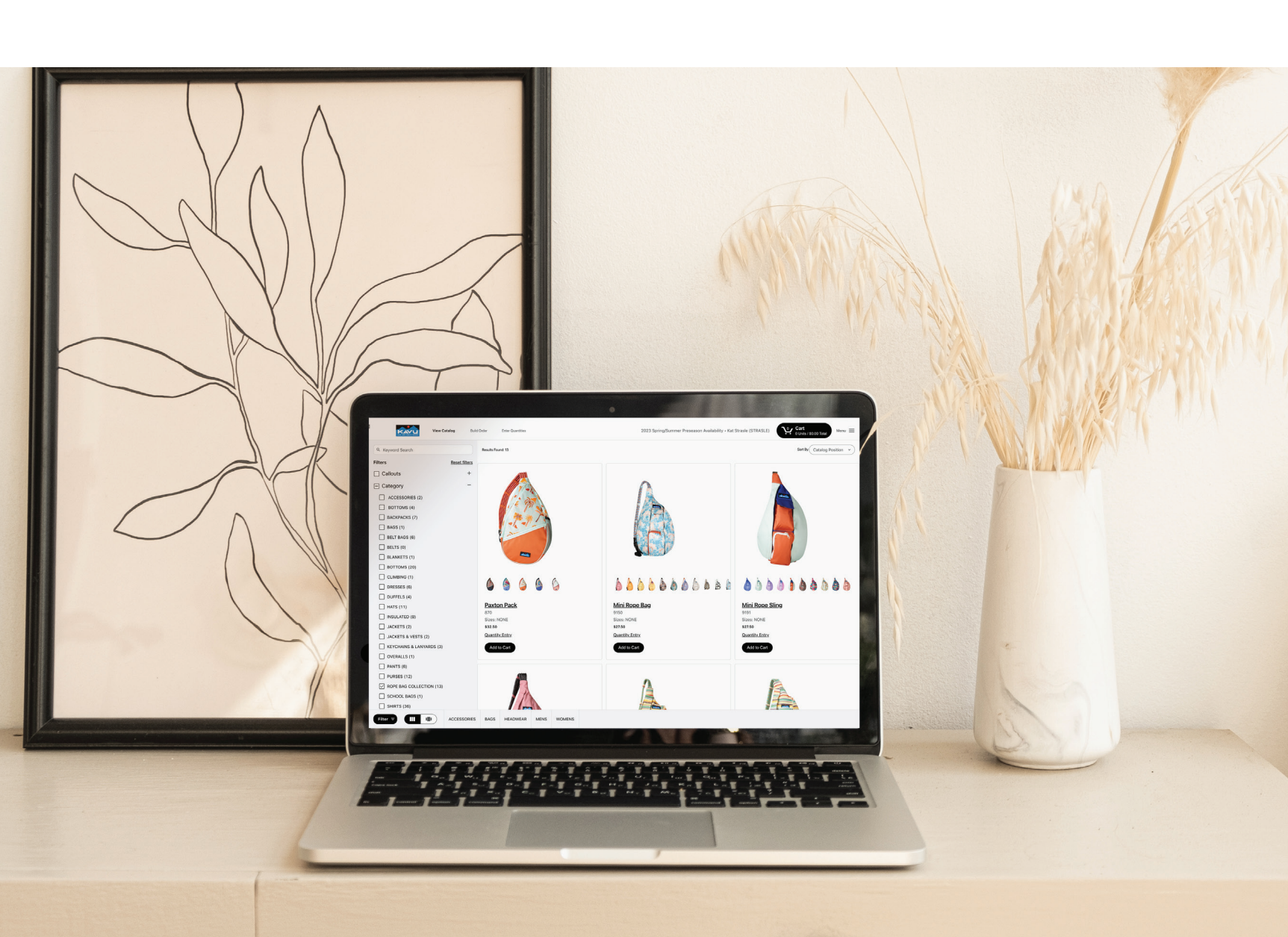
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This best practices guide is intended to transform the relationship between brands and retailers by helping them create a more collaborative approach to wholesale merchandising. As brands are continuing to replace their printed catalogs with digital tools, the importance of having assets like videos, alternate product photos, on-model imagery is becoming more and more evident.



“When compared to in-person B2B sales, virtual selling offers key advantages like speed to market, streamlined efficiencies, cost savings and a massive potential sales lift. The success of this approach hinges largely on the quality of the digital assets that brands use when merchandising to wholesale buyers in place of tangible product samples.”

Sawyer Frank
Senior Director of Global Sales
Elastic Suite

INCREMENTAL SALES LIFT

Leading global brands that are innovators in digital merchandising understand the importance of utilizing enhanced digital sales assets. Elastic client brands, such as The North Face, Patagonia, Active Brands, Stanley PMI, Rab/Low Alpine and Burton are all seeing a significant lift in sales as a result of adopting enhanced marketing assets and digital sales tools. Based on sales data from manufacturers that use the Elastic platform, these brands are seeing an average sales increase of 23% per wholesale order compared to those who are not using enhanced assets.

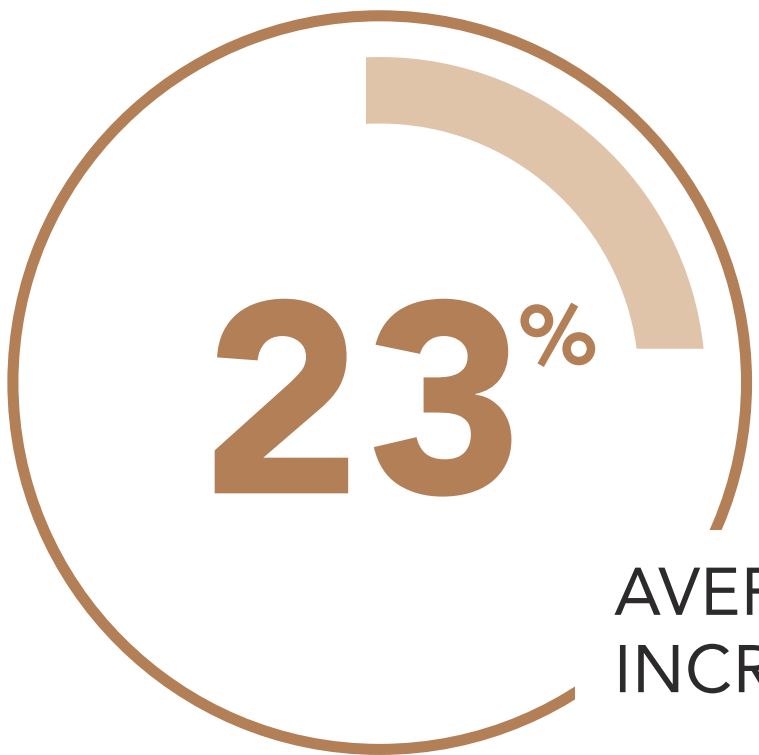
“Using enhanced product images for virtual merchandising was one of the most impactful decisions we’ve made. It’s allowed us to quickly meet digital content demands triggered by changing market conditions and to reimagine our content creation possibilities even within incredibly tight wholesale product launch windows.”

Jon Frederick | US Country Manager
Rab & Lowe Alpine

Retailers are benefitting from digital merchandising technology and enhanced digital assets, too. This increase in average sales per order is being driven by retailers’ ability to access products and engage with brands via a more streamlined and efficient purchasing process.

“As a retailer, having these resources always available to access anytime, on my schedule and without having to wait for a brand sales rep to call me back is a big improvement to the wholesale buying process. It helps bring everything to a central location making it easy and quick to find.”

Brian Mildenstein | Owner/General Manager
Fin & Feather



AVERAGE SALES INCREASE

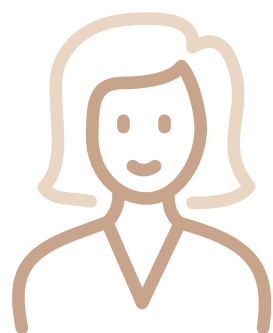
**23% AVERAGE SALES INCREASE
PER ORDER AMONG LEADING BRANDS**



ENHANCED DIGITAL ASSETS

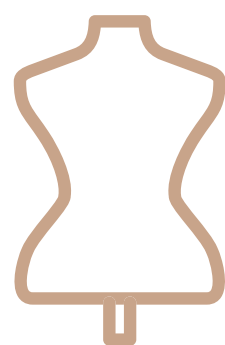
Making the transition from traditional B2B sales materials to enhanced digital assets means making the switch from printed to digital sales catalogs. For creating consistency with line presentations in digital catalogs, most product images consist of white background studio shots by color or style accompanied by succinct product names, descriptions and feature summaries. This format helps in effectively presenting the sheer number of available products, combined with color, style and feature variations associated with most B2B sales campaigns.

For products that are new for the season, expected to be best sellers, offer unique features or justify showcasing for other reasons, consider enhancing those digital assets with the following types of imagery...



On-Model Video

Short video clip with models wearing or demonstrating the product or line.



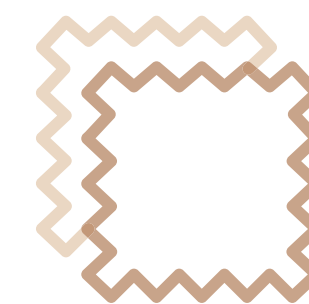
360/3D

Interactive, controllable panoramic images portraying the product from all angles.



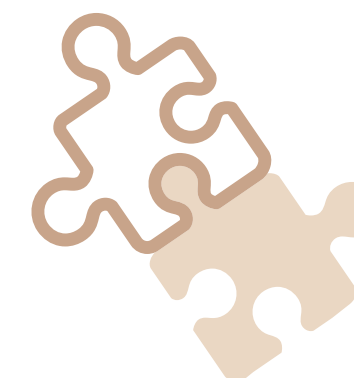
Close Up

A static image that shows details or features of a product from a closer perspective.



Textural

Close up with special angles and lighting that reveal product texture or fine detail.



Compatibility

Shows the product in compatible usage with related products or accessories.



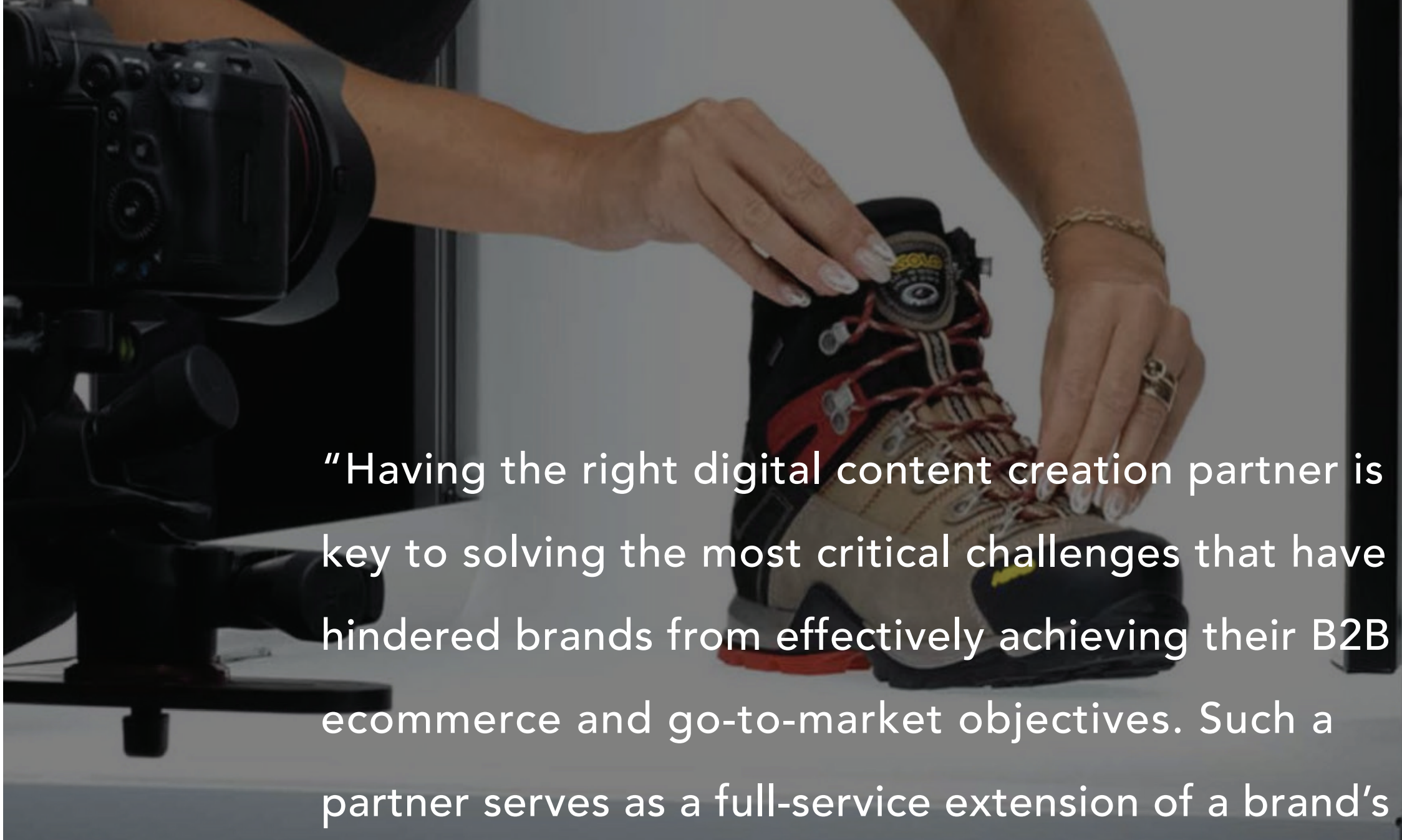
Inspirational and Lifestyle

Models portray the product in lifestyle or inspirational scenes that help tell a brand story.

Engage an Expert

Creating consistent, high quality and high-volume digital assets can be a daunting task for any size brand. The resources required to create, enhanced digital assets in-house is beyond the reach of most marketing budgets. A third-party content creator can be invaluable in cost-effectively producing the necessary product videos and imagery through a studio designed specifically for this purpose. This type of service uses the combination of robotic camera systems, studio automation software and a standardized production process to ensure the highest level of quality and consistency.

Elastic Suite has chosen ShowLabs as our preferred partner for content creation because of their expertise in the industry and because the photo and video assets are preformatted to be loaded directly into Elastic catalogs.



"Having the right digital content creation partner is key to solving the most critical challenges that have hindered brands from effectively achieving their B2B ecommerce and go-to-market objectives. Such a partner serves as a full-service extension of a brand's internal team by seamlessly providing content delivery and deployment by following a real-time shoot-to-publish workflow while also integrating with leading ecommerce platforms."



Danny Effron
CEO
ShowLabs

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

When paired with enhanced digital assets, accurate and compelling product descriptions are equally important for both buyers and sellers. Because of the self-service nature of digital B2B selling, providing as much detail as possible allows buyers to make decisions independently and place and build orders all within one system.



Consider the following best practices when creating product descriptions aligned with a digital B2B sales process.

- Know Your Buyers
- Keep it Simple
- Make it Easy to Scan
- Product Features and Benefits

“Enhanced digital assets and effective product descriptions have made a huge difference for selling virtually. There are only so many adjectives you can use to describe products in getting the message across to buyers who naturally want to touch and feel products. So, that was our biggest hurdle to overcome and we have been trying to use every tool we can to help our buyers engage virtually with our products.”

Stephanie Mason | Sale Operations Manager
KAVU



Know Your Buyers

Knowing the needs of wholesale buyers at your retail partners is the first step in creating the best product descriptions. Understanding both the strengths and limitations of their in-store merchandising will help predict how your product lines will be featured on the shelf. A solid understanding of the changing needs and seasonal transitions of your retailers will also help in positioning your products appropriately.

Keep it Simple

Your initial and basic product descriptions should be brief and to the point. Bulleted copy also work well and product descriptions should follow the four “C’s” of copy writing:

Clear

Descriptions should be clear enough to be understood by every type of buyer.

Concise

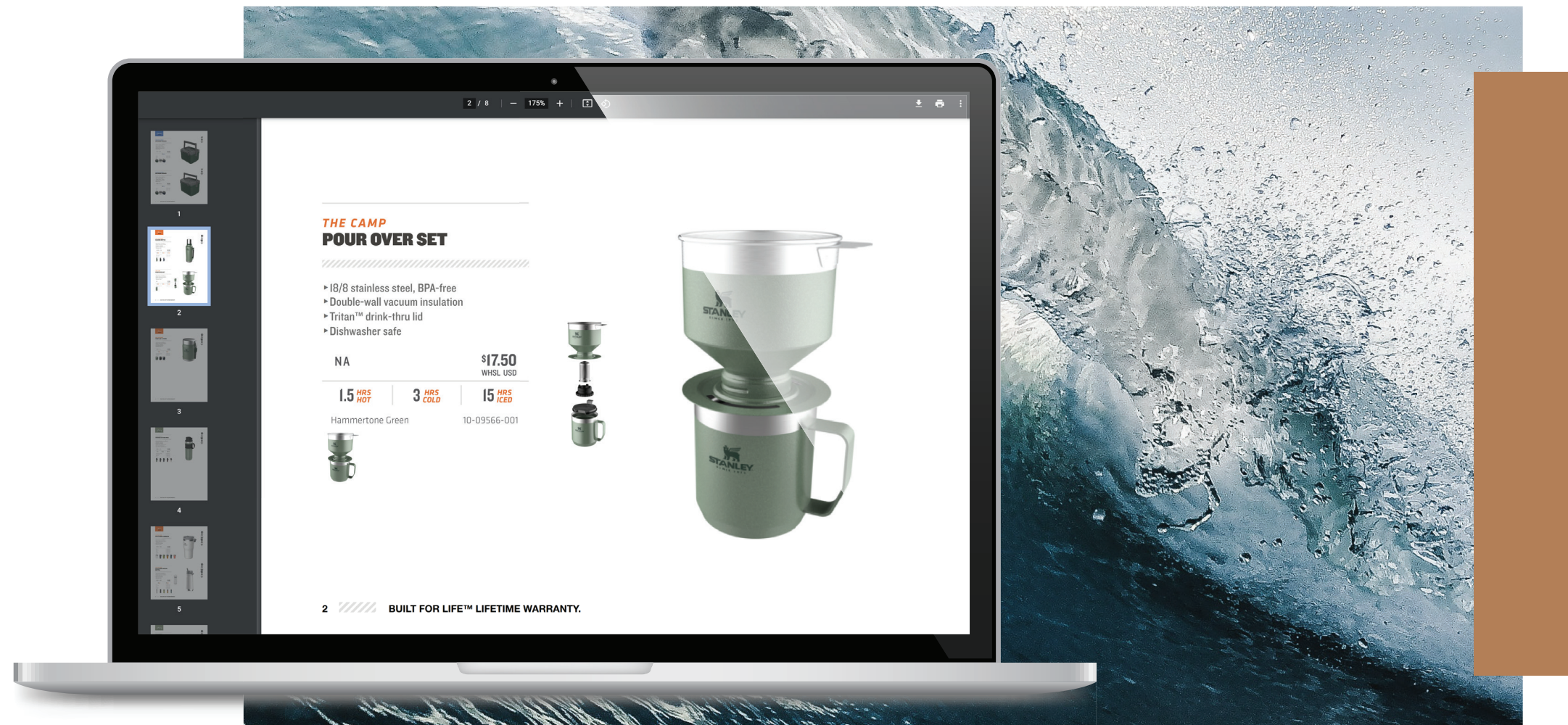
Use the fewest number of words to accurately describe your products.

Compelling

Directly address why your products are desired by your retail partners’ customers.

Credible

Ensure that the information you are sharing is accurate and avoid hyperbole.



Make it Easy to Scan

Most people have short attention spans and read only about 16% of what is written. Your product descriptions need to capture that limited amount of attention in an effective way. By making your details easy to scan when reading, buyers can find the information they need more quickly. Make your product descriptions scannable by including bullet points, short paragraphs, ample white space and varying size fonts.



Product Features and Benefits

As a manufacturer, you may feel compelled to share all of the great qualities of your products. Resist this notion by being selective and share only the best and most unique product features or benefits in the description. Consider separately including an FAQ for communicating more detailed product benefits, features, specifications or technical information.

BRAND STORYTELLING

Unlike traditional marketing, effective brand story telling evokes positive feelings and an emotional connection with your products. Relate your brand and products to the lifestyle or activity for which consumers use your products. In this sense, both retailers and consumers can develop an affinity with your brand and its story, in addition to learn about your products. Using enhanced digital assets and B2B merchandising can support a brand story that more strongly engages retail partners and ultimately motivates individual consumers at sell-through, too.

“Effective content marketing is about mastering the art of storytelling. The brand story that matters is not the one you want to tell, but the one your customers experience when they engage with you. Facts tell, but stories sell.”

Bryan Eisenberg | Co-Founder
BuyerLegend



With effective storytelling, your brand can become much more to your retailer partners and consumers than just the products you sell. And this kind of connection has the potential to differentiate your brand from the competition and boost sales. Consumers are drawn to companies that demonstrate how they are supporting causes or making an impact in ways that are important to their individual beliefs or lifestyles. **Knowing that a company cares about more than just their bottom line resonates with consumers** and causes them to increase their loyalty to your brand and to actually buy more.

Brand storytelling begins with how you merchandise and market your products to your retail partners. A consistent story will flow all the way to the consumers during their in-store or online shopping experience.



How you portray your products through product-focused and marketing assets in your B2B sales process can reflect and help communicate your overall brand and company ethos. When creating these assets, consider the following questions to create the most impactful images:

What values, emotions or ideals do your product images evoke to both wholesale buyers and consumers?

What kind of feelings do you want buyers to have when they interact with or use your products?

What kind of value are you offering them every when they engage with your brand content?

What does your brand mean to them beyond just the products you're selling?

Are you creating a deeper emotional connection with your brand and products that can increase loyalty?

Using engaging digital assets in this way will deepen your relationships with retail partners and build greater brand value with your end consumers. These stronger connections with your brand can translate into bottom line results, drive sales growth over the long term and create life-long brand evangelists.

NEXT STEPS

To fully benefit from these best practices, take the next step by adopting a virtual B2B merchandising process that utilizes enhanced digital assets. Doing so will create a more efficient and streamlined approach to merchandising that is focused on the needs of your retail partners and ultimately your consumers.



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