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More manufacturers are selling through Shopatron's order management system

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Shopatron Inc.'s order management application is growing among both manufacturers and retailers, according to the vendor, which says it signed up 102 new manufacturers in the first quarter of this year. Almost half of the quarter's new manufacturer brands, or 47, are in the sporting goods and leisure category. During the same time, participation among retailers in the sporting goods category grew by 50% to more than 3,000, the vendor says.

Shopatron's e-commerce order management solution allows shoppers to make their purchase at a manufacturer's site, with fulfillment from the participating retailer closest to the customer's location. Participating retailers and dealers log onto the system to see what's been ordered, and, if they have a match in stock, they register it. An algorithm built into the system's back end technology then assigns the order to the nearest matching retailer. That retailer ships the order to the consumer, or consumers can pick up the item at the retailer's store.

"In this economy, our customers need revenue, and we provide new revenue streams at very attractive prices and terms," says Ed Stevens, CEO of Shopatron. Stevens says participation among retailers has been growing as well, adding, "Manufacturers do well to partner with retailers in tough times."

Not all segments of sporting goods are seeing increased retailer participation, Shopatron reports. For example, 152 retailers fulfilled manufacturer orders through the service in the first quarter, about the same number as the 159 who did so in the first quarter of last year. Stevens notes that retailer activity is a function of many factors including seasonality, manufacturer product cycles and economic cycles. Overall, Shopatron expects its business to continue to accelerate through 2009 on the strength of increased manufacturer adoption in North America and Europe