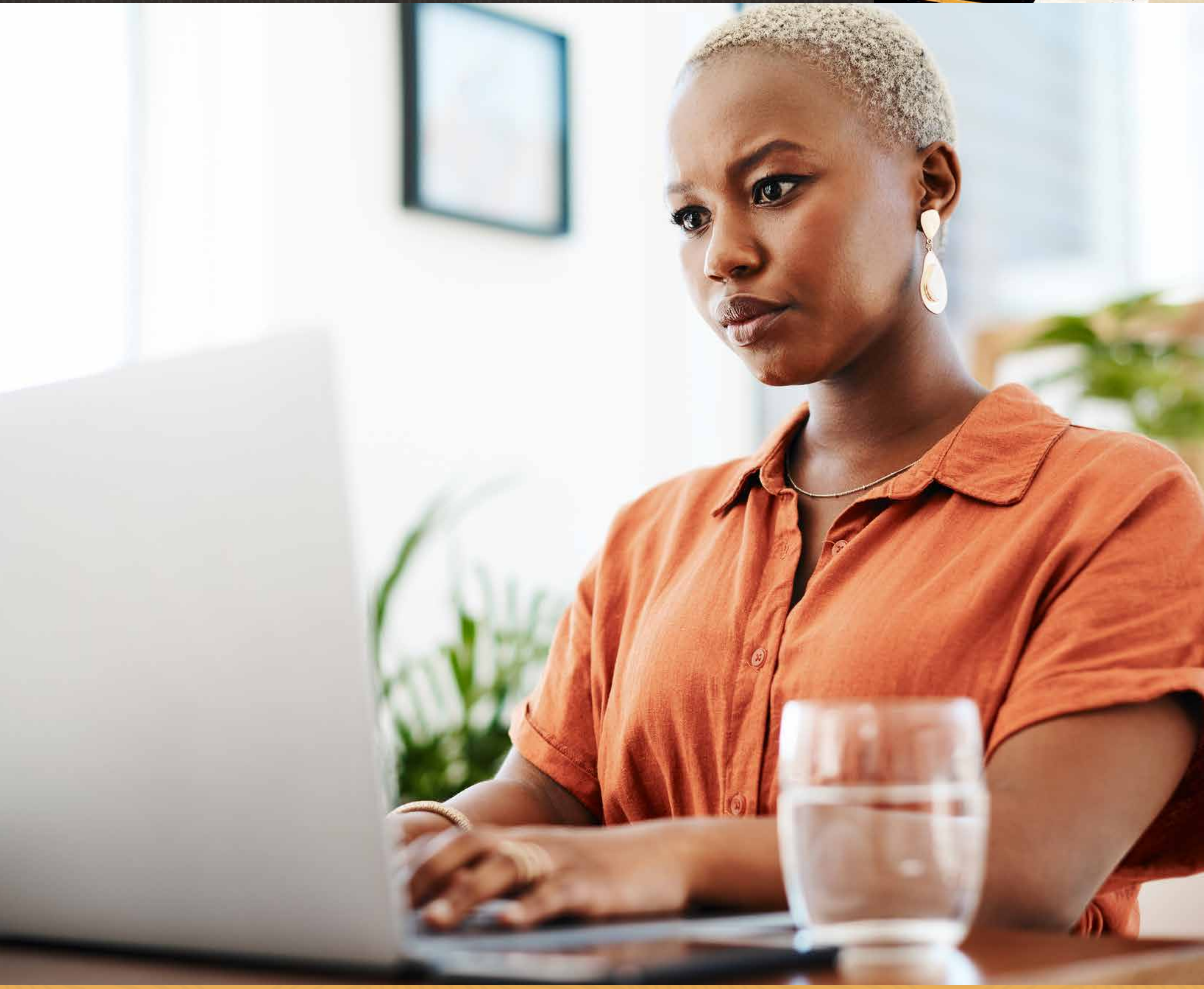
WHITE PAPER

Simplifying B2B Sales Activities With a Self-Service Account Portal



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Read Time: 10 minutes

Simplifying B2B Sales Activities With a Self-Service Account Portal

As business grows and account volumes rise, B2B companies hire sales, account management and customer service staff to drive sales and ensure buyers receive the best customer experience. Yet, it can become burdensome to onboard and manage this extra headcount.

For customers, friction arises when straight-forward account management activities require a call or email to resolve. Simple questions such as “where’s my order?” and “can I pay an invoice?” snowball into bigger questions, like “did they get my message?” and “when are they going to get back to me?”. Ultimately, their frustrations can be summed up with a simple question: “why can’t I do this myself?”

Through automation and self-service, many B2B sales activities that typically require manual, rep-centered involvement can be eliminated. B2B brands are turning to self-service features to cut down on routine tasks that plague business buyers, such as contacting their sales representative to reorder and check order statuses. By empowering your customers with an account portal that provides access to billing, order and subscription data and letting them channel any requests directly to your sales and service teams, B2B organizations can reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction.

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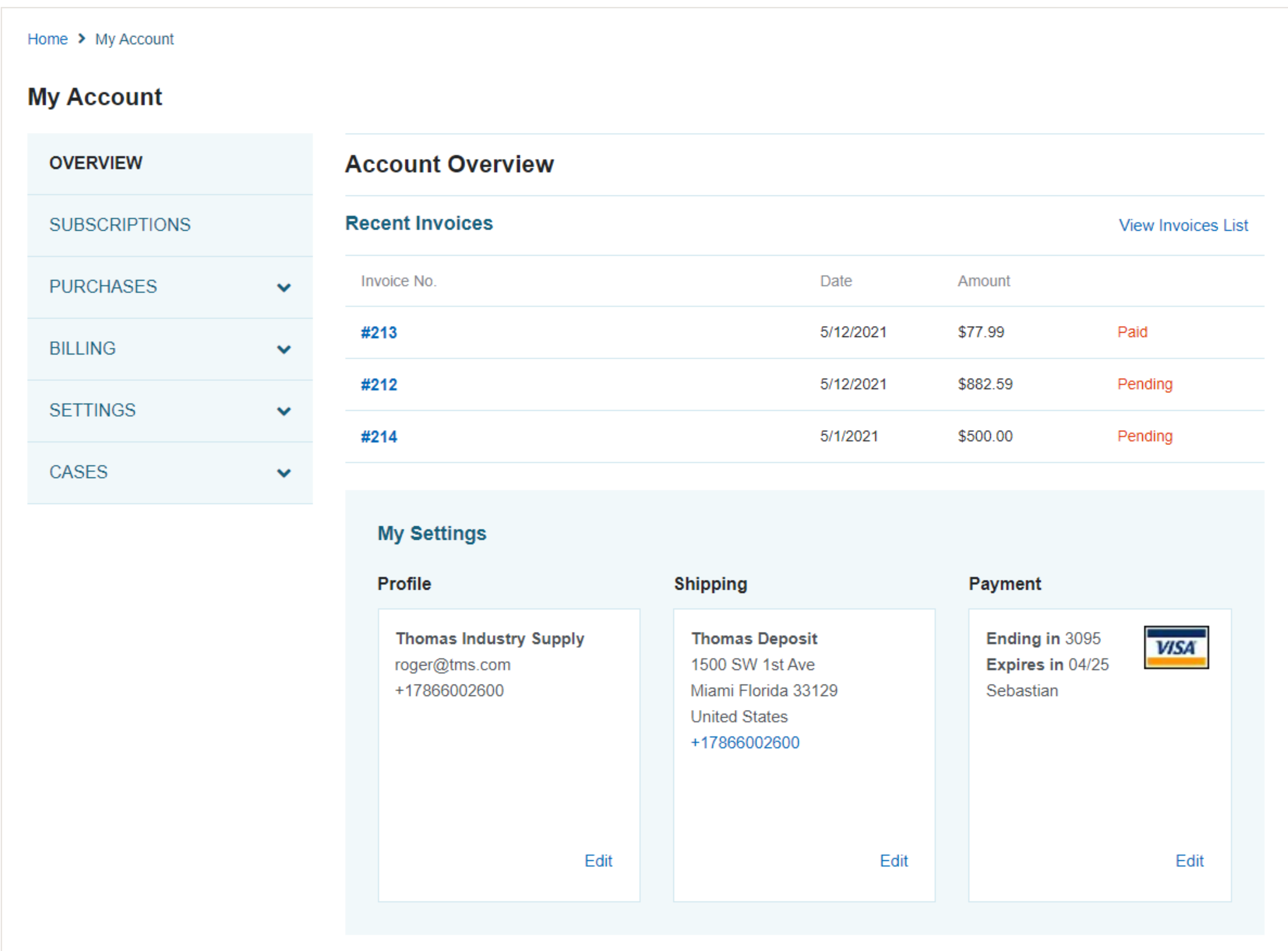
CHAPTER 1

What Is an Account Portal?

An account portal is a web page, which can be part of an online store or separate site, that provides a place for customers to perform various account management tasks that would otherwise require a sales representative to do for them. These tasks range from simple administrative changes to powerful automated sales activities.

By allowing customers to manage their shipping details or payment information such as credit cards, you can keep these important facets front and center, and reduce time spent on routine account maintenance.



CHAPTER 2

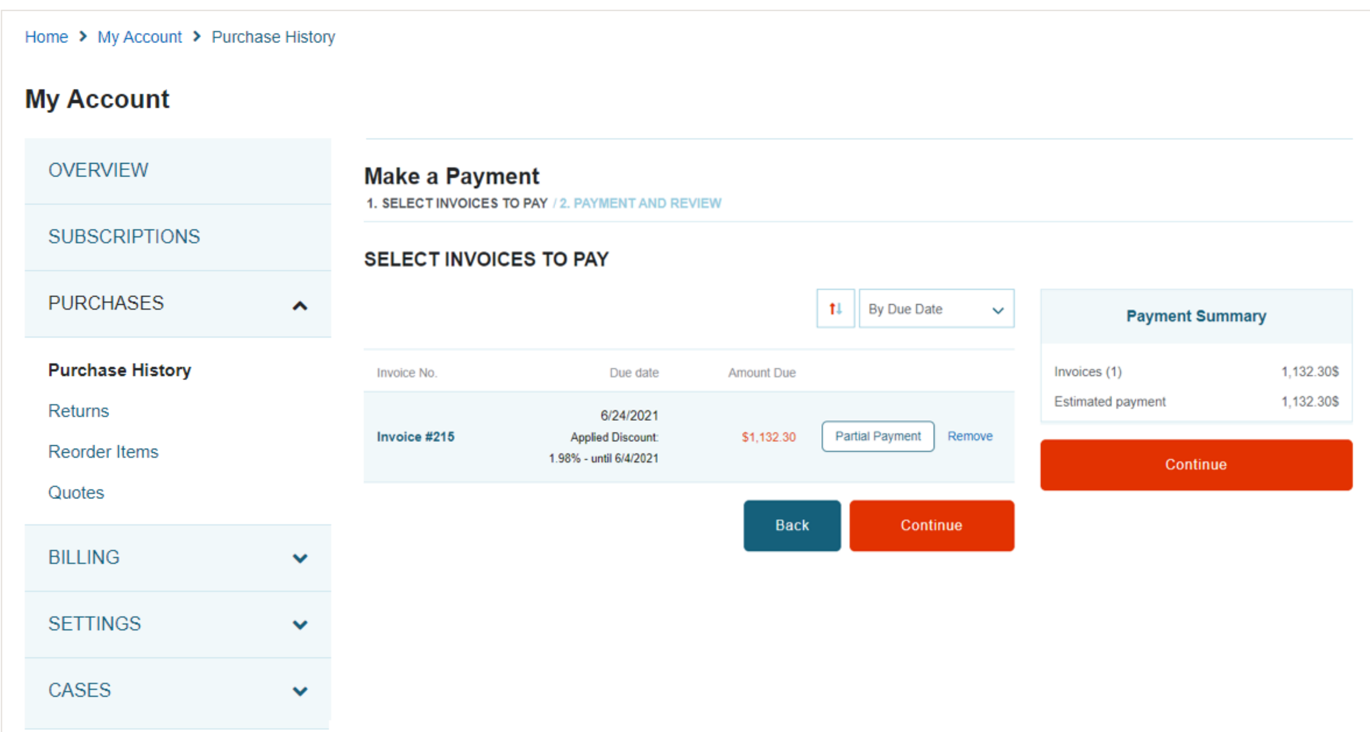
Paying Invoices

Business buyers are constantly inquiring about their account balances and open invoices, so why not eliminate paper from the equation by giving them the ability to view them in your account portal?

By allowing customers to view invoices and make payments themselves, you can eliminate billing steps and improve your cash flow. Account portals permit customers to view account statements, outstanding and available balances, deposits, credit memos and account terms without having to contact their sales representative.

B2B companies can further automate their invoice management by providing customers with terms the ability to make full or partial payment against single or multiple invoices via credit card, ACH or applying open credit memos against their balance. When invoices are paid, they are automatically deducted from their outstanding balance; all without bothering sales or accounts receivable groups.

Account portals can even incentivize your customers to pay before a due date with an increased credit limit or discount. This gives your team more bandwidth to chase down accounts with past due invoices instead of those that routinely pay them on time.



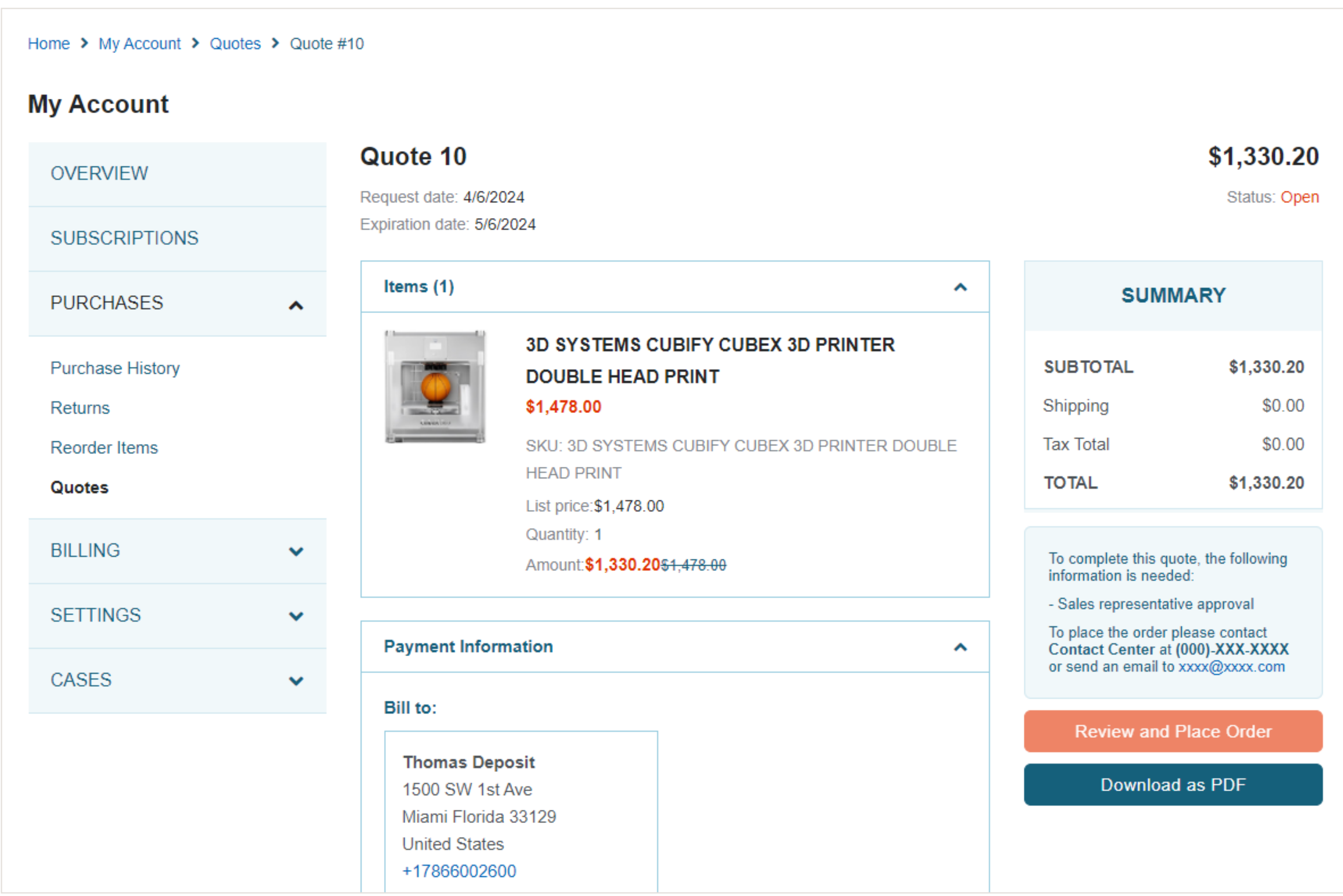
CHAPTER 3

Quotes and Sales Orders

First time buyers and repeat purchasers frequently submit quotes for new bulk purchases. Since it typically takes time to generate these estimates, buyers can get distracted, and it may be more difficult to convert these quotes to sales orders.

To improve the quote-to-cash process, B2B companies can use an account portal to allow buyers to view their submitted quotes, check their status and, once a sales representative approves, convert the quote to an online sales order.

After creating a quote with a sales rep, establishing the rest of the process can be handled online. You can then give customers the space to review it on their own time. They can discreetly request any changes for your sales team to revise. When they're happy, they can convert the quote to a sales order to begin the purchasing process.



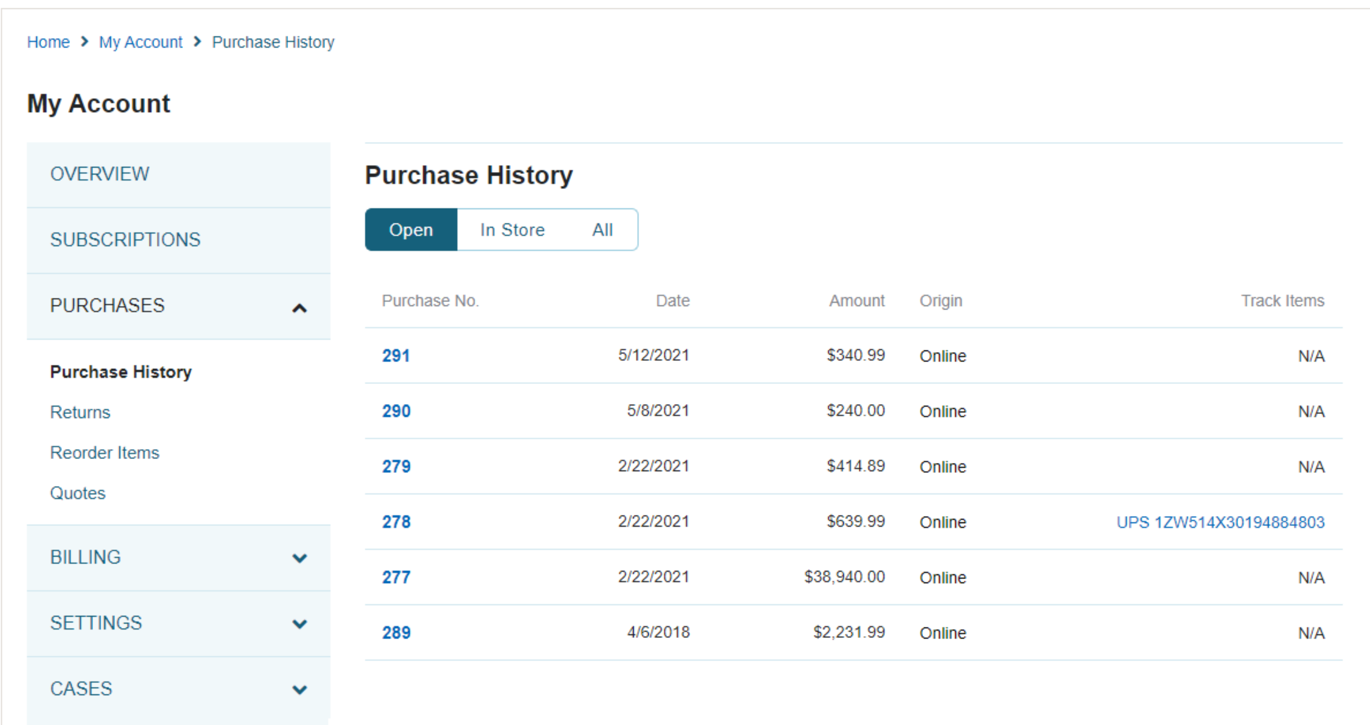
CHAPTER 4

Order History

B2B purchases are inherently more complex than typical B2C orders. Since these bulk orders have more line items, they take longer to pick, pack, ship and deliver to business buyers. Products and services could have different lead times or potentially be backordered. By tracking your orders effectively, you'll be in a better position to keep your buyers happy.

An account portal gives buyers the ability to review their orders on their own without having to bother your staff. The more purchase information you can surface, such as billing, payment method, order status and shipping tracking, the more buyers are informed, reducing mundane interactions with your sales and customer service teams.

As many B2B companies have a repeat purchase rate between 20%-40%, it is ideal to enable buyers with established terms to complete routine restocking on their own using previous orders.

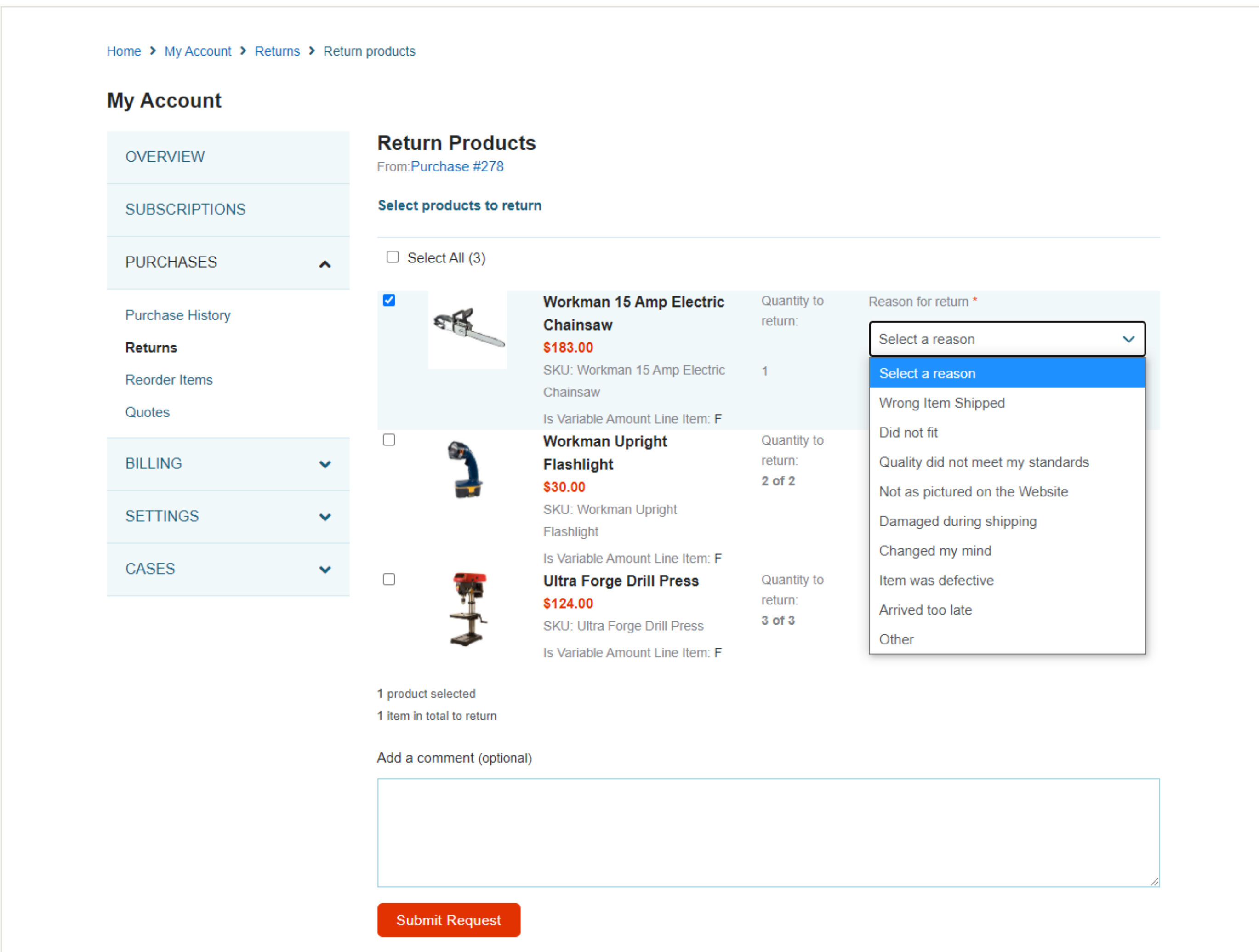


CHAPTER 5

Processing Returns

Having a robust return policy helps instill more buyer confidence with your organization and leads to more long-term B2B sales. That's why managing returns has become a necessary, yet significant cost of doing business. However, dealing with returns can be a complex, time-intensive task for your sales, customer service and operations teams.

To optimize the return management process, B2B companies can enable business accounts to initiate an online return authorization and monitor the progress of their credit or refund. By providing an available list of acceptable reasons for return and allowing optional comments, companies can gain insights into why customers are returning products.



CHAPTER 6

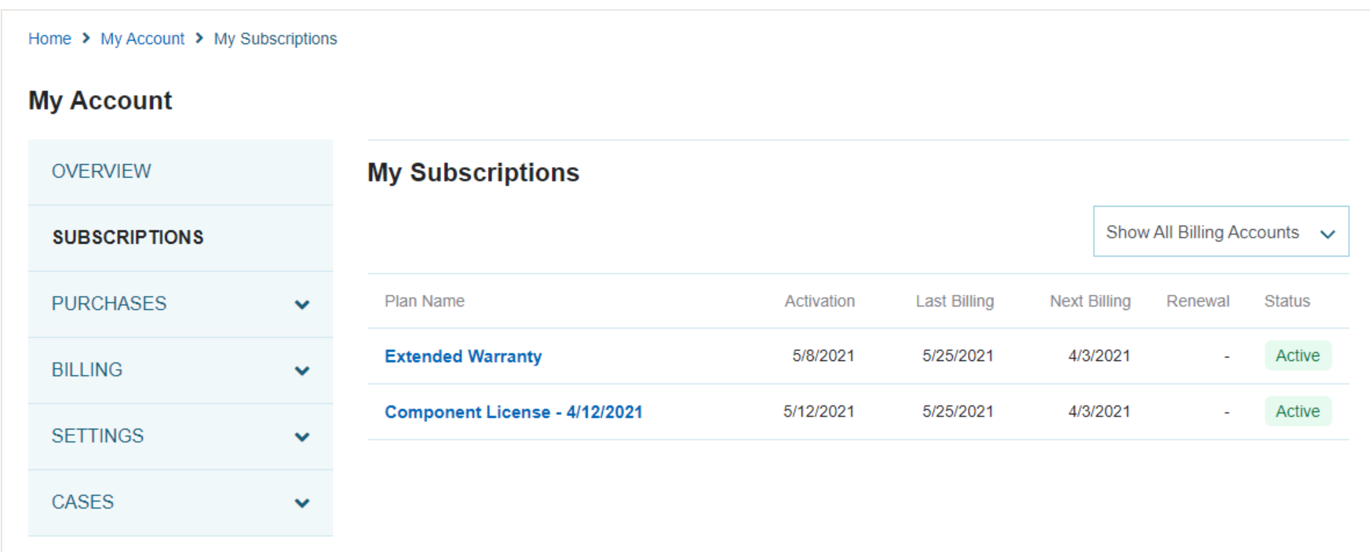
Subscription Management

Services companies (those selling ongoing support contracts or software licenses with recurring billing) need to address additional needs from their subscribers. If a customer hires a new employee, for example, and needs to pay for an additional user license, they don't want to contact their sales representative if they don't have to. Why not let them add an additional license to their existing contract themselves?

Giving visibility to customers about their current subscriptions, as well as a breakdown of things like their cost and quantity is a great way to boost their confidence. But why stop there? Allowing subscribers to modify their services, such as increasing or decreasing quantity, adjusting optional add-ons, and suspending or canceling a subscription, eliminates burdensome barriers and improves customer satisfaction.

If you want to restrict some of these options to avoid down sell, you can modify your subscription management to only allow upsells and require them to contact their sales rep to cancel services.

> "SuiteBilling is clearly a step ahead in terms of the system flexibility, consolidation and ease of access."
>
> **Jean-Claude Homet, VP of Finance, Datavalet**



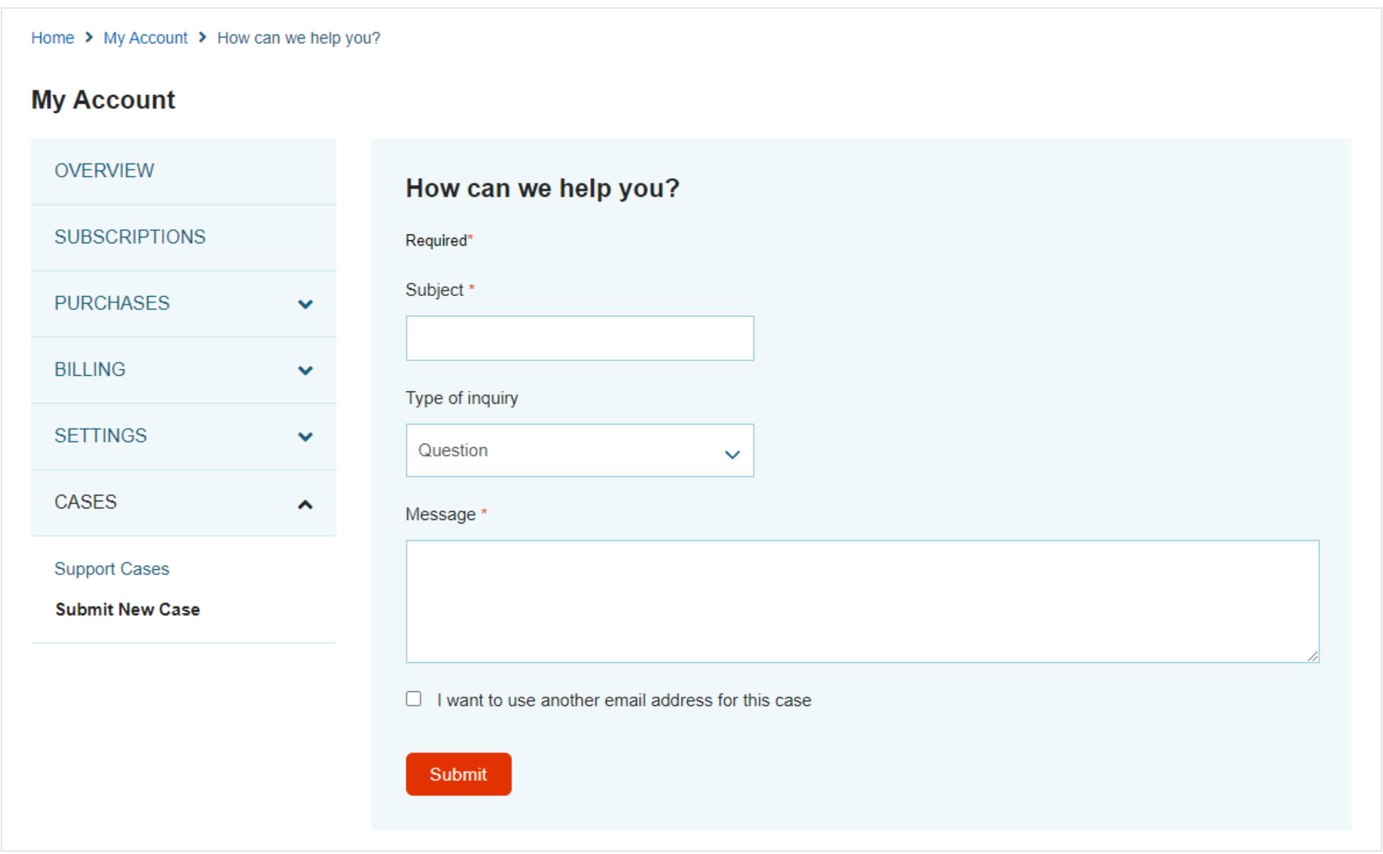
CHAPTER 7

Support Case Management

Customer service is one of the biggest differentiators for most businesses, so it's essential to hit on all cylinders. In the B2B environment, awesome customer service is even more crucial. The stakes are higher as contracts are more valuable and buyers need to be impressed.

B2B companies can improve engagement and client satisfaction by enabling customers to submit questions online.

Queries and complaints raised over phone and email are at a risk of getting lost or going untracked. Support cases raised through the account portal are automatically created and logged in your CRM. Buyers can read and respond to your customer service representatives through the account portal, or by responding to automatically generated email confirmations. All cases are saved in the account portal and in your back-end CRM so both parties can reference them in the future.



CHAPTER 8

NetSuite SuiteCommerce MyAccount

When an account portal is part of a single platform with ERP, CRM, order and inventory management systems, you gain real-time visibility into every facet of your business. Account information like invoice payments, support cases and subscription changes are automatically updated and can be used across your entire business.

Since this key information, such as order and financial data, is already stored in NetSuite, SuiteCommerce MyAccount allows you to expose it directly to customers in a self-service account portal. SuiteCommerce MyAccount helps business buyers save time by allowing them to take care of routine tasks online 24/7. Customers can quickly view their account settings, pay invoices, convert quotes to sales orders, check order status, view order history, process returns, update subscriptions and manage support cases.

Companies can significantly improve customer experience and reduce the cost to serve customers by providing an online self-service account portal.

> "We never would have been able to achieve the growth we've seen without NetSuite, not without adding significant resources."
>
> Dan Perlak, VP of Operations, Barcoding, Inc.