

# Bringing designer homeware within reach.

How Herman Miller Group brings  
the showroom to the shopper's living room.



## Who is Herman Miller?

Design Within Reach was founded in 1998 by noted designer and entrepreneur Rob Forbes.

Living in San Francisco, Rob found that when he attempted to furnish his apartment with clean, simple classic items they were largely out of reach. Rob knew there had to be a better way, and the idea for DWR was formed: making innovative works from iconic designers accessible. In 2014, the brand was acquired by noted American furniture maker Herman Miller

From the beginning, Rob and the DWR team focused not just on selling, but on educating and elevating taste, sharing the origin story behind each piece and the individuals who created it.

They've also placed a special emphasis on service. When customers visit a DWR store or studio they never see a "Do Not Touch" sign. DWR invites people to linger with their kids and dogs, and to tap into the expertise of their design professionals, who can help with everything from completing a room with the perfect accent piece to furnishing an entire house.

## Challenge

The main challenge DWR wanted to solve was to convey the personality of their items online, and extend the same level of service to online shoppers as they do in-store.

In-person, shoppers can touch, feel, sit on, and otherwise fully experience furniture—which is vitally important since that’s how they’ll actually use the products if they purchase them.

In the store, customers can try out the pieces, get an idea for how true the colors are, and make informed decisions about what they’re buying. The online experience is missing certain key elements that factor in a furniture-buyer’s decisions, so Design Within Reach needed to find a way to marry its successful and inclusive in-store experience with its online one.

DWR was also hoping to boost its AOV by empowering design professionals to upsell and cross sell online.

## Solution

To ensure DWR’s growing number of online shoppers have access to the same level of service and knowledge as its in-store customers, the digital team added Virtual Shopping in early 2020. Virtual Shopping was rolled out to every DWR store, with 150 of the brand’s design professionals using the service. The team quickly embraced 1-on-1 Virtual Shopping, racking up nearly 750 new conversations per week, translating to hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales.

Implementing Virtual Shopping also meant removing an important limitation for in-store design professionals—they aren’t capped by the number of customers who come into their specific store anymore. Now they are able to tap into a new source of website visitors and local customers who in turn benefit from their product expertise.



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BEN GROOM  
CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER FOR DWR’S PARENT COMPANY,  
HERMAN MILLER GROUP

“Stellar customer service is part of our DNA. We’re incredibly proud of the experience shoppers get when they come into a studio, and now we’ll be able to extend that to our largest audience—visitors to our website.” Ben Groom, Chief Digital Officer for DWR’s parent company, Herman Miller Group.

## Results

With video calling, DWR brings collections to life virtually and helps online customers better envision how pieces will look in their own spaces, giving them the confidence to follow through with expensive purchases. That confidence was borne out during DWR’s Black Friday/Cyber Monday sales in 2020 which yielded a basket size of \$20,619.62, placed by an online customer shopping virtually with an associate at DWR’s Charlotte, North Carolina location.

The value that Virtual Shopping tools powered by Klarna brings to both associates and online shoppers is evident from the number of repeat conversations: nearly one in five customers who shop virtually return to shop a second time.

“The feedback from our design professionals has been absolutely phenomenal. Once they started seeing the volume of sales their colleagues were driving through Virtual Shopping, we got a flood of inquiries asking when it would be available in their store.” Ben Groom, Chief Digital Officer for DWR’s parent company, Herman Miller Group.



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