

# Fashion makers and fashion buyers, together at last—online

Wholesale marketplace JOOR connects 250 brands and 7,500 boutiques for online buying.

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*Topics: boutiques, Carmen Deseos, Catherine Malandrino, Deseos, Diane von Fürstenberg, fashion, fashion designers, funding round, handbags, international e-commerce, Investment, iPad, Joor, luxury goods, Mona Bijoor, online apparel sales, online marketplace, Rebecca Minkoff, supply chain, Theory, Uri Minkoff, wholesale, women's fashion*

As the sole owner of small, upscale fashion and home décor boutique Deseos in New Jersey, Carmen Negron is usually the only person on the sales floor. So her regular buying trips to New York City can feel like a chore, she says, thanks to pushy salespeople and the time taken from the daily operation of her shop.

That's why a few months ago she began using JOOR, an [online marketplace](#) that launched in March 2010 and which helps boutique owners connect with fashion designers. Negron can sign in online at any hour of the day, browse the latest fashions from such major brands as Diane von Furstenberg, Theory, Catherine Malandrino and Rebecca Minkoff, and then place her orders.

"I think it's a wonderful tool for business owners, especially when I'm the only person that's here 100% of the time," Negron says. "I probably go on it once a day, if not more than once a day, to just kind of see what's been updated. I've placed a few orders so far and it's nice to have access to these top lines. There are even some newer ones that I would have never found."



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[Fashion designers](#) also can benefit from the site, says Uri Minkoff, CEO of handbag and apparel brand Rebecca Minkoff. Over the past two months, the designer has made 210 connections with new and existing buyers on JOOR. "Right now, for our sales people to be able to have a database at their fingertips of many, many stores that they can connect with instantly is a huge plus," Minkoff says.

JOOR founder Mona Bijoor says Minkoff's results are not uncommon, as most retailers get 10% to 15% of wholesale orders from the site. "An average brand on our site is introduced to five or 10 new boutiques," she says. "Plus, we are finding that being able to see all of their vendors under one roof is [leading to] buyers purchasing more. About 10% of the time, an order will be placed by a boutique, and then an hour later, they go back and order more."

Boutique owners can access the site for free. Fashion brands pay a one-time \$5,000 registration fee, plus a percentage of their sales, which starts at 2% and increases depending on sales volume and other factors. Since its founding in March 2010, JOOR's membership has grown to 250 brands and 7,500 boutiques.

The site operates on a platform developed in-house that enables fashion brands to upload pictures and product information themselves, change them as often as they like, as well as communicate with potential buyers. Buyers request to be "matched" with a designer they are interested in. The designer in turn reviews that buyer's profile to ensure that it is not already working with a competing boutique in the area, for example. Once the two are matched, the buyer then can place orders; orders average about \$2,000, Bijoor says.

Today, JOOR announced that it has raised \$2.25 million in Series A financing led by Battery Ventures with participation from Lerer Ventures, Great Oaks Venture Capital, Landis Capital, Forerunner Ventures, William M. Smith and Richard Mishaan.

Bijoor says she will use the capital to expand JOOR internationally. "International will be a major focus for us in three to six months," Bijoor says. "10% of our business is international, and international boutiques are really excited for this to work because of the time difference and travel costs."

Bijoor also says the company plans to upgrade the look of the site, roll out an [iPad](#) app early next year and implement a search function.