Philippe's Retail News: Out of Stock Doesn't Mean Not Available

November 2026 · Philippe Jeanneau

"Out of stock" doesn't always mean "not available."

Sometimes it means "nobody asked yet."

From my desk today

A retailer asked me a fair question recently: why was he seeing some items out of stock on our platform?

Here's what I explained.

At Randmar, we list most, if not all, of the SKUs from the brands and manufacturers we support.

That doesn't mean we automatically stock every one of them. It means we adjust our stock levels item by item, based on how fast each one sells.

He followed up, rightfully so: "So what does that mean for the SKUs that show out of stock? Or the ones you've never stocked before?"

I love this question.

The retailer reality

Nothing stings like a customer asking for a product you can't get.

They don't wait. They switch brands, or they switch stores.

And it adds up. IHL Group estimates that inventory distortion, meaning out-of-stocks plus overstocks, will cost retailers around the world about $1.7 trillion in 2026. That's 6.2% of retail sales. Out-of-stocks make up about two-thirds of it.

Sources: IHL Group, 2026 Inventory Distortion Study; Retail Insight Network, citing IHL (out-of-stocks share, 65.6%).

But here's what nobody tells you: a lot of "out of stock" items aren't really unavailable. They're simply waiting for someone to ask.

Behind the scenes at Randmar

Here's how it works with us.

1. Listed isn't the same as stocked.

We list most, if not all, of the SKUs from the brands we support. That gives you the full picture of what each brand makes.

What we stock is a different decision. We constantly run an algorithm that evaluates inventory needs based on current and past sales, item by item. As a rule of thumb, we maintain 8 weeks of stock, and critical purchase orders are automated, so our fast movers don't run out.

2. Out of stock? Request it with one click.

This is the part I love.

Anyone with a Randmar account can request stock on an item that shows out of stock, or that we've never stocked before. One click.

And requesting stock is **not** a commitment to buy. It's a signal to us that someone wants access to that item and wants to sell it on their channel.

3. Your signal shapes our stock.

Our stock follows demand. A request tells us where demand is starting, before it shows up in sales.

What "out of stock" means on the Randmar platform		
What you see	**What it means**	**What you can do**
In stock	We carry it based on sales velocity	Order it. By 3 p.m. local, it ships the same day
Out of stock	We list it, but it's not on our shelves right now	Request stock with one click. No commitment
Never stocked before	We list it, but nobody has asked yet	Request stock with one click. No commitment

Source: Randmar.

What it means for you: the out-of-stock items on our platform aren't dead ends. They're opportunities to carry something your competitors don't, and to diversify your business.

My real point

An out-of-stock item isn't always a closed door.

Sometimes it's an opportunity nobody has asked for yet.

Your quick win this week

List three products your customers ask for that you can't get today. Look them up with your suppliers, and wherever you can, request the stock. With a Randmar account, it's one click and no commitment.

Your turn

What's one product your customers keep asking for that you can't find?

Randmar. Your shelves, our warehouses.

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