

Hain Daniels Case Study



About the client

Founded in 1993, the Hain Daniels Group is one of the UK's leading food companies. Covering the chilled, frozen, and ambient food and drink categories, the Group employs around 1,300 people across eight locations.

Included in the company's diverse portfolio of "dawn to dusk" brands are the New Covent Garden Soup Company, the Linda McCartney's range of vegetarian products, Hartley's, Sun-Pat, and many more.



The "aha" moment

Not every question needs a new answer. Sometimes, challenges have already been solved – even if you don't always know it right away.

Such was the case for Jon Colby, Hain Daniels' Data and Insights Controller who, in 2020 as the threat of COVID lockdowns resulted in panic buying, had become increasingly conscious of inefficiencies in the company's analysis of flow-of-goods and sales data. "Access to the data wasn't a problem," he says. "We had no shortage of information from our retail partners. The issue was that collecting and analysing that data was painfully slow and time-consuming."

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Before SKUtrak, we were pulling data manually from retailers every day and having to link individual spreadsheets together to make them usable. Even then, we had to massage that information because of differences between operating and promotional weeks. It was complex and extremely time-consuming.

**Jon Colby, Data and Insights
Controller at Hain Daniels**

In 2017, Hain Daniels signed up for SKUtrak, intending to use it for sales and category performance analysis across four major UK retailers. This was useful, but the platform was typically used to support reporting needs on an as-needed basis. Jon wanted to see if SKUtrak could be employed more systematically to help Hain Daniels' analytical challenge of reducing time to insights with much less effort.

A year later, he began using the DataShare platform for a single retail account. "It was a transformative moment," he notes. "Until then, we'd been carrying out most of our analytical work within retailer data portals. With SKUtrak DataShare, we were able to take those datasets and very easily bring them to life with visualisations in Tableau. DataShare fundamentally changed the way in which we access, analyse, and use our data."

After initial reporting success, his team began injecting information on promotional bulletins into their modelling and linking their existing data to give them quick insights into which retailers were running promotions at any given time.

"That provided us with a great advantage because it allows us to get a handle on our promotional performance faster and with fewer people," he continues. "It used to take a whole week to run a quarterly promotions review. With SKUtrak, we reduced that to a day, freeing people up to work on different datasets or something entirely different."

Key benefits

- ✓ **85% time reduction** in time-to-insight
- ✓ Faster, easier, and more consistent analysis of key trading data.
- ✓ Deeper understanding of sales performance.
- ✓ Reallocation of resources onto higher value and more engaging tasks.
- ✓ Ability to predict and respond to issues with promotions and supply.
- ✓ Smarter and more collaborative relationships with retail customers.

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One of our retail customers asks us to provide update reports first thing on a Monday morning. Previously, that meant asking a category manager to work through most of their Sunday. SKUtrak reduces that task from around six hours to just one, which is a much more reasonable request.

Karl Frestle, Commercial Director for Grocery at Hain Daniels

Smarter decisions in less time

DataShare acts as a bridge between SKUtrak and a CPG's own reporting tools, analytics platforms and enterprise business systems. From depot and store stock levels through to EPOS data and sales forecasts, DataShare combines the power of SKUtrak's proprietary retail data model and the Snowflake® data cloud to provide direct access to mission-critical information and insights.

For Jon, the initial use of DataShare suggested Hain Daniels had only scratched the surface of the true value the platform could offer, especially as more metrics became available. "We suddenly found ourselves able to make important decisions much faster than before, saving a lot of time and effort along the way," he continues. "Naturally, we wanted to see what else was possible."

Making room for insight

As important as all of these things have been for Hain Daniels, SKUtrak's value goes far beyond just resource optimisation or faster decision-making. Instead, the platform has also given the company a deeper, richer understanding of its sales performance.

"The data itself only gives you part of the story," says Karl Frestle, Commercial Director for Grocery at Hain Daniels. "And if you spend too long extracting and analysing it, there's no room for insight."

With SKUtrak, we actually have the time to sit down and think about what our information is telling us." Understanding the "why" behind Hain Daniels' performance is a critical consideration for both Karl and Jon alike. While EPOS data and reports provided by third parties might give them insight into the brand's day-in, day-out sales figures, that information is typically too shallow to offer much in the way of nuanced insight. SKUtrak, on the other hand, "allows us to infer the probable cause behind different issues", says Karl.

"Every day, it gives us an incredibly granular view of what is happening at category level," adds Jon. "That allows us to compare performance

over different periods of time and understand the overall trends. More importantly, it helps us understand why things have happened and what's likely to happen next, particularly in terms of predicting obstacles like compliance issues."

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SKUtrak provides us with a lot of very detailed information very quickly, but does so in a way that makes it easy to understand. It means that we can frame things in the right way when presenting our findings to an external audience.

Jon Colby, Data and Insights Controller at Hain Daniels

The fine-grained nature of the data offered by SKUtrak is part of that capability, but so too is its timeliness according to Jon. "You have to be able to keep up," he says. "When you bring category data in from market measurement and research organisations, it's two weeks old before you get it. That's no good if there was an issue with a product line during that period. The lag is too great; all you'll see is that you sold less than you expected to."

With SKUtrak, he continues, Hain Daniels has the ability to have informed and immediate conversations with its buyers. Rather than having to rely on best guess information or wait until third-party data has been made available, the company is instead able to discuss things in near real-time. That's critical, not just in terms of operational excellence, but also in terms of its relationships with retail customers.

Stronger, more collaborative relationships

Karl highlights one recent situation with promotions as an example of SKUtrak as a strategic enabler. "We had feature space in 300 stores with one of our retail partners, but we weren't seeing sales uplift in the kind of volumes that we had been anticipating", he explains. ▶

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SKUtrak helps us understand the ‘why?’. Sales volumes are easy to quantify, because we can get that information day in and day out. SKUtrak gives us the background. It helps us identify what causes events to play out as they do, and enables us to step in where we need to.

Karl Frestle, Commercial Director for Grocery at Hain Daniels

“That was in spite of the fact that we knew, from SKUtrak, that stock was definitely going into stores.” “Before SKUtrak, we would have had to wait for the promotion to end before we even knew there was a problem,” he continues. “Instead, we were able to conclude that there was an issue with compliance oversight across the stores. That enabled us to have an informed conversation with the retailer as to what was going wrong. That’s incredibly valuable.”

“The key is giving retailers something that they can act on,” elaborates Jon. “If we can go to them and confidently say ‘our data shows that you need more stock going into stores to support this promotion’, that’s a practical, provable recommendation that they can act on. That’s vital if we want to be seen as a constructive and strategic partner.”

“That’s what SKUtrak gives us,” he concludes. “Confidence. Certainty. And everything else flows down from that”.

Talk to us to find out more

Email us at info@skutrak.com



About Crisp SKUtrak

As the leading retail data company, Crisp leverages AI to facilitate the integration, access and exchange of data between CPG brands, retailers, and distributors, providing unprecedented visibility to optimise retail sales and the supply chain infrastructure. Trusted by 6,000+ brands representing more than \$2.5T in retail sales across over 250K stores, Crisp transforms retail data into a competitive advantage. In the UK, these capabilities are delivered through SKUtrak – Crisp’s demand intelligence product, trusted by leading grocery suppliers to improve availability, reduce waste, and grow sales for a more efficient, sustainable retail supply chain.