

# Alpro Case Study



## About the client

Established in Belgium in 1980, Alpro is one of the world's foremost pioneers of plant-based foods. The European market leader for drinks and food products based on soya, Alpro's range also includes a variety of goods made using almonds, hazelnuts, rice, oats, and coconut.

Alpro employs more than 1,100 people across Europe, and has major production facilities in Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom.



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There's a big difference between the information you need being available and having the resource required to gather it. Extracting data from a retailer portal, formatting it, gleaning insight from it – that's a huge task when you extrapolate it across every customer.

**Scott Morton, Head of Customer Collaboration at Alpro**

## Growth is good

At the same time, growth can also be challenging – particularly when it's fast.

Just ask Scott Morton, Head of Customer Collaboration at Alpro. Having been with the business for more than 14 years, he has seen Alpro grow, "astronomically," in his own words, as they have expanded into new product lines and markets.

"When I joined the business, we had a commercial team of nine people covering our whole operation," he says. "Now that number had gone up to 65 in the UK alone. That gives you some idea of the journey we'd been on during that time."

Around 2016, Morton stepped into a new role as the company's Sales Service Manager ("essentially the head of commercial operations", he notes), taking responsibility for key tasks like Order to Cash, Demand Planning, and Customer Collaboration. As well as being a step into a whole new function, that opportunity also gave him greater visibility of Alpro's challenges in those areas – and customer collaboration quickly became a focus.

"We had very little resource," continues Morton. "The company was growing rapidly, and we'd built out our sales, marketing, and category functions in response, but we didn't necessarily have that same movement from an operations perspective. That team hadn't grown in the same way."

That had big implications from a customer relationship standpoint, he continues, because it meant that Alpro wasn't able to gather the information around supply chain performance that it needed to communicate with retailers effectively. "Really, we had very limited visibility into things like service levels,

deliveries, and all of the things that you need in order to be able to build collaborative relationships," he continues.

While Morton was aware of that challenge, so too were Alpro's customers. Reports from B2B relationship specialist Advantage Group saw Alpro at the foot of the table when it came to the company's rankings for key operational issues, even while performing well elsewhere.

It was clear that something needed to change. And, with the help of SKUtrak, it soon did.

## Solving the imbalance

"It was a very simple conversation," says Morton of his first interaction with Atheon Analytics. "I just laid it all out: we had one demand planner doing all of our UK forecasts, around 200 customers to manage, and a business that was – at that point – just nudging up to a quarter of a billion pounds in sales. Right away, it was obvious that they knew the kind of challenge that we were facing."

Equally obvious, he says, was the value that SKUtrak could bring to Alpro – and how quickly it might do so: "I was a little bit amazed that a product like this was available, to be honest. The level of detail that we could get to with it, the range of reports we could create. From moment one, I knew it was exactly what we needed."

For Morton, SKUtrak promised to deliver exactly what Alpro lacked the resource to do internally; gather data from across its customer base – daily – and present that information back in a user-friendly and actionable way. "It was eye-opening," he continues. "Here's a system that collates and curates all of that information automatically, and

## Key benefits

- ✓ Significant improvements to customer relationships thanks to better visibility of supply chain performance.
- ✓ Consistency with retailer data sources, empowering more constructive internal decision making.
- ✓ Smarter and more agile approach to promotional planning and measurement.
- ✓ Preservation of service levels during the global pandemic as a result of demand prioritisation.

gives it back to us in a way that makes it easy for us to drive fundamental improvements in our standards of communication.”

The decision made, SKUtrak was deployed – and immediately started solving some of Alpro’s challenges. Very quickly, it got Morton and his teams on the same page as their retail partners, giving them a detailed understanding of their performance as their customers saw it. For a company that had been used to working with its own internal metrics, that proved to be a step-change in terms of visibility.

“Before SKUtrak, we’d have our view about our service level performance, and our customers might have a completely different one,” says Morton. “When you start working from the same information, you can see where the problems actually are. You can begin to pinpoint depot issues, spot problems with specific products, and so on. It’s a whole new level of detail.”

snowballed across the business.”

Some professional training from SKUtrak’s Customer Success team gave some extra momentum. “Suddenly, we had another set of insights to work with,” says Morton. “Looking at our promotions, for instance, we were able to see the level of uplift based on the ingredients we used, or the retailer we were running with. SKUtrak gave us the ability to understand cannibalisation across other categories, as well.”

What resulted from those insights was a smarter – and more agile – approach to promotional planning, according to Morton. “Say we introduced a new promotional mechanic,” he says. “Within a short period of time, we’d be able to understand how that was performing compared to previous approaches, and modify our strategy accordingly. SKUtrak helped us become more effective from a sales perspective, as well as an operational one.” ■

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SKUtrak is accessible, but it’s deep too. If you need to share something, you can just screengrab the graph you need, drop it into a presentation, and away you go. But if you want to download a large dataset, filter that, and conduct your own analysis, you can do that as well.

**Scott Morton, Head of Customer Collaboration at Alpro**

## Branching out

Other successes soon followed. Better insight into on-shelf availability provided Alpro with a greater understanding of lost sales, for instance, and Morton points to significant service level improvements as a result of the company’s enhanced awareness of its distribution performance. As word spread however, it also became clear that SKUtrak had relevance beyond just the operations team.

“Just as it surprised me, I think that SKUtrak surprised other people around our business as well,” Morton continues. “It held obvious value for our Category team in terms of range reviews, for example. Then, our Planning and Revenue Growth Management (PRGM) team adopted it for the purpose of promotional analysis too. It started as a self-contained thing, but very quickly

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The last thing you want is a retailer telling you that you failed a delivery when you had no idea that was the case. If you’re not working from the same information, you’ve completely lost the opportunity to have any kind of positive dialogue.

**Scott Morton, Head of Customer Collaboration at Alpro**

## Talk to us to find out more

Email us at [info@skutrak.com](mailto: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.