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SKUtrak

St Austell Brewery Case Study

About the client

St Austell Brewery's origins date back to the mid-1800s, when wine merchant and maltster Walter Hicks purchased the Seven Stars Inn and learned the art of brewing. Today, in addition to a wide range of well-known beers like Tribute and Proper Job, St Austell also owns and operates a number of pubs and places to stay across the South West of England.



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SKUtrak gives me back my time – time that I can now spend helping my team to develop, or working with retailers, planning for new products, and analysing promotions. It's good to be able to spend more time on the things that matter.

Charlie Johnston, Head of Sales (Off Trade) at St Austell Brewery

For Charlie Johnston, Head of Sales for Off Trade at St Austell Brewery, SKUtrak gives him something absolutely critical: simplicity. "It makes my life easier. It helps me do my job better and faster," he says. "I use it literally every working day."

It's been about two and a half years since Charlie joined St Austell. Like many SKUtrak customers, he had prior experience with the platform, having used it before in an earlier role. It took little time to convince his current employer to sign up for SKUtrak. Since then, Charlie says that SKUtrak has gone on to prove its value time and time again – to him and his team and the brewery as a whole.

Speed and efficiency aren't the only benefits offered by the platform, however. Singling one retailer portal out for not being the most user-friendly, Charlie notes that the data they produce is often difficult to read – and even harder to interpret effectively.

"One of the things I like most about SKUtrak is that it pulls all of that data and then puts it into a series of visual reports," he says. "Those make it incredibly easy to get a read on our performance and position."

For Charlie, it all starts with the time that he can save. "I know that I could get all of the data that SKUtrak gives me from elsewhere, but doing that would just be time consuming," he says.

The problem, he continues, lies in the various stockholding portals that retailers make available to suppliers; without the aid of SKUtrak, says Charlie, he'd have to log into each and then download the relevant data – a process that he describes as "clunky" at best.

A shortcut to insights

With SKUtrak, on the other hand, the St Austell team gets a shortcut to insights – one that they use to ensure a consistent level of availability. "We're always tracking stock levels at depot and store level to make sure that there's enough across the two," says Charlie. "Where necessary, we can also push our retail partners to order more if we think they're going to run short."

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SKUtrak helps us maximise the availability of our stock with retailers. This assists in meeting our volume targets, becoming the best possible supplier to retailers, enhancing our performance, and consequently contributing to our Profit and Loss (P&L) targets as well.

Charlie Johnston, Head of Sales (Off Trade) at St Austell Brewery

That alone has a tangible impact on St Austell's ability to respond when things don't look quite right. "With raw data, it's not as obvious when there's a problem," he adds. "With SKUtrak, it's much easier to spot problems before they happen."



Key benefits

- ✓ Faster and easier access to trading performance data.
- ✓ Improved ability to anticipate and manage issues with supply.
- ✓ Better-informed decision-making around the allocation of stock.
- ✓ Helps to protect brand loyalty by ensuring on-shelf availability.

Better discussions, better decisions

While the insights that SKUtrak generates might give Charlie an easier way to get an overarching view of what's going on, though, he's not the only one to benefit.

"We have a field sales team of two, and one of their main responsibilities is to check that stock is where it should be across the stores on their patch," he notes. "With SKUtrak, they can log in each day and see how much stock each retailer should have in store. When they get to each branch, if those cases aren't out on display, they can have a constructive conversation about that. It stops them from going in unawares".

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Before SKUtrak, the conversation was largely 'sales are lower this month, I wish I knew why.' Now, we can quickly find out if it's a stock-led problem or something else – and that's a much better standing point from which to explore.

Charlie Johnston, Head of Sales (Off Trade) at St Austell Brewery

On the flip side, continues Charlie, the platform also helps the brewer make smarter decisions when its own issues arise. "If there's a problem with our canning or bottling lines and we need to ration stock, SKUtrak helps us understand who has cover," he says.

"That means we can allocate orders

based on an accurate picture of depot and store-level stockholding."

Meeting demand, protecting loyalty

As well as helping Charlie and his team to protect the availability of St Austell's beers in terms of 'business as usual' trading, SKUtrak plays an invaluable role around promotions as well. With many retailers now bundling sales from multiple breweries together in multibuy promos, Charlie acknowledges that being seen is now more important than ever.

"It's imperative that we have our stock on th shelf, as failing to do so results in lost sales and a lack of presence for our customers. SKUtrak gives us the certainty that we have stock exactly where our customers expect it to be," he concludes.

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We launch NPD every year. SKUtrak allows us to understand their performance as soon as the day after they land in store. It also helps us identify any stock issues that may impact the launch. With SKUtrak, we can check store-by-store, see who has what, and determine whether it is enough.

Charlie Johnston, Head of Sales (Off Trade) at St Austell Brewery

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.