

Yoplait Case Study



About the client

Founded in France in 1965 and now operating in over 50 countries worldwide, Yoplait has grown to become the world's second-largest player in fresh dairy products. Affectionately referred to as 'the little flower', Yoplait made its debut in the UK in 1991, quickly gaining popularity with well-known sub-brands such as Petits Filous, Frubes, Wildlife, and Yop.

For nearly six decades, Yoplait has been a leader in the dairy industry. The company's recent divestment from General Mills in 2021, which resulted in Sodial taking full ownership, has refocused attention on its brands and spurred a vigorous innovation plan. Yoplait has always been passionate about making its nutritionally-rich, delicious yogurts accessible to everyone. For over 15 years, Yoplait has been fortifying its children's product range with Calcium and Vitamin D.



Optimising availability

As a seasoned retail professional with a nine-year tenure at Waitrose behind him, Jimmy Coulson was no stranger to inventory data. But when Jimmy – now Head of Supply Chain at Yoplait for the UK & Ireland – transitioned to the supplier side, new challenges quickly sprung up. The comprehensive suite of data he once used for managing inventory and processing orders was no longer within his grasp.

"I found myself in a predicament, thinking, 'I don't know what my availability is'," says Jimmy. "I wanted to understand my stock positions in the depots, because I firmly believe that the supplier-retailer relationship should involve two-way communication. But without that insight, it clearly wasn't going to be easy."

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With SKUtrak we don't just see raw numbers and figures, we discover trends, patterns, and actionable information. We can read the story behind the data—availability, depot stock, store coverage—and interpret this narrative to predict when substantial orders might be on the horizon, particularly during periods of low availability.

Jimmy Coulson, Head of Supply Chain at Yoplait UK

Jimmy is quick to highlight that his philosophy isn't necessarily commonplace. "My retail experience had shown me that many suppliers hesitate to engage with retailers, fearing they might overstep boundaries," he continues. "There's a fear of becoming a nuisance. Yet collaboration is essential."

Nonetheless, the prospect of having to compile data from multiple systems across various retailers and drawing insight from still presented Jimmy with a formidable and time-consuming task. At least, that was the case until he happened to discover SKUtrak.

Unearthing insights

Jimmy was already aware of SKUtrak as a platform, having heard about the grocery analytics platform during his time at Waitrose. With his new challenge in mind, he decided to explore it as a solution. As it turned out, SKUtrak promised to be much more than just a data consolidation tool -- it could also provide the rich insights Yoplait needed to make sense of intricate supply chain data.

In a happy coincidence, Jimmy discovered that SKUtrak had already been implemented within the company. However, its application was primarily focused on the commercial side, supporting insights and decision-making in category management. It played a role in promotions, while also helping Yoplait to assess changes in pricing and their subsequent impact on sales.

Key benefits

- ✓ Increased product availability, boosting levels from **87% to 95%** in Asda stores and from **90% to 95%** in Morrisons stores.
- ✓ Improved and refined supply chain management.
- ✓ Better scrutiny of product line forecasts, prompting more accurate and timely adjustments.
- ✓ Stronger and more collaborative relationships between Yoplait and its retail partners.
- ✓ Better insights and category management decision-making.
- ✓ Faster response to changes in supply.

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Our availability at Asda was about 87% at the time. We had a discussion with them, presented the data, they agreed to make changes, and in the days following, we received an additional 30,000 cases on top of our predicted orders for Asda. That increased our availability from 87% to 95%.

Jimmy Coulson, Head of Supply Chain at Yoplait UK

To date, SKUtrak's potential benefit to Yoplait's supply chain operation remained untapped – something that Jimmy was determined to change. With that in mind, he quickly seized the opportunity to integrate SKUtrak into the organisation's supply chain management processes.

Increasing orders at Asda to meet demand

The impact of SKUtrak on Yoplait's operations is exemplified through two key success stories. The first centres on Asda, where the availability of Yoplait's product initially hovered at roughly 87%. Through the strategic deployment of SKUtrak, Jimmy and his team provided comprehensive data to Asda, highlighting the need for increased orders to meet market demand.

The outcomes of that change were striking. Asda augmented their anticipated orders by an additional 30,000 cases, boosting Yoplait's product availability from 87% to 95%. This decision alone contributed to a significant sales improvement.

Commercial successes are only one part of SKUtrak's contribution, however. Jimmy points to better levels of collaboration with Yoplait's retail partners, too.

Building collaboration

"Given the volume of product lines – between 200 to 700 – that a retail planner handles weekly, it's challenging to scrutinise individual forecasts," Jimmy explains. "Yet, when we shared our availability data and suggested improvements, we found that they began dedicating more time to review our product lines' forecasts."

In some cases, that additional attention resulted in demonstrable change. "Asda, confronted with their own data and understanding the SKUtrak metrics, could not deny the need for adjustments. We displayed the SKUtrak data simply, highlighting improvement areas," Jimmy continues. "Our aim was twofold: to encourage forecast revisions and to foster a more collaborative approach."

To do that, Yoplait initiated a weekly report designed to help navigate availability hurdles. "Despite their

extensive workload and numerous product lines and suppliers, Asda's team committed to brief weekly adjustments, which has maintained availability at around 95%," says Jimmy. "It's even reached 96 or 97 percent recently. Since that initial order boost, they've continually maintained high availability levels."

Underpinning this success is what Jimmy describes as a "dual-pronged approach to collaboration". "On the one hand, we aim to optimise efficiency – how can we streamline their operations?" he says. "We explore options such as larger case sizes and improved order management. Simultaneously, we focus on improving product availability. We strive to enhance our cooperative efforts without encroaching excessively on their time."

Repeating the same success with Morrisons

The second success story revolved around Morrisons, another major UK retailer. Similar to the process followed with Asda, Jimmy and his team used SKUtrak to help improve product availability from around 90% to 95%.

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We simply presented the SKUtrak data in a straightforward presentation, highlighting the opportunities for improvement. Our goal was to not only get them to alter their forecasts but to create a new way of working with them.

Jimmy Coulson, Head of Supply Chain at Yoplait UK

The increase in availability meant that even late in the day, Yoplait's products were still readily available on store shelves, driving a significant contribution to sales.

Here, to ensure peak performance, the team leverages the power of SKUtrak for frequent availability checks. "SKUtrak

serves as our daily compass, with alerts primed for immediate response, supplemented by occasional site visits,” shares Jimmy.

With relentless diligence, the team scrutinises product availability, interprets regional sales to identify key demographics and those stores in need of extra attention, and meticulously monitors stock levels – especially in larger outlets. Observations of low wastage levels drive discussions with stores about increasing product stocking, facilitating a balance between availability and sales.

“We want to spearhead the industry, and this analytical, insight-led approach paves the way for engaging dialogues and the realisation of substantial results for all stakeholders,” Jimmy concludes.

“It’s been an extraordinary journey, marked by a significant return on investment.” ■

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.