

ECOMMERCE CASE STUDY: *KRUPP BROTHERS*

Who they are

If you know wine, then you know the prestigious Krupp Brothers and Stagecoach Vineyards. Their low-yielding vines produce grapes sought by some of Napa Valley's most iconic wineries, and bottled into their own esteemed Krupp Brothers brand.



Before

In the early days of the Krupp Brothers brand, the company sold the bulk of its wine through distributors, while circulating mail order forms to a small list of loyal consumers for direct-to-consumer sales, both of which were standard practices for most wineries at the time. However, the direct-to-consumer portion of the business was modest, and Krupp Brothers was confident that a much higher potential existed for this segment. Company executives suspected that if they presented the market with an easier and more attractive method for obtaining their wine directly, and they actively promoted that channel, then enthusiastic customers would line up and the Krupp Brothers brand would grow. An online store was an important piece of that strategy.

Challenge

Krupp Brothers is a very successful yet very small company, with a busy staff who needed the online store to be easy to set up and operate without deep technical skills or the need to hire expensive outside programming resources. It was also important that the system contain built-in tools to support the legal aspects of selling wine online, such as setting alcohol volume limits by state, as well as other tools commonly used in the wine industry. Finally, they required the online store to look like a natural extension to their website with a seamless flow and consistent respect for the company's branding, without having to re-design their site on their eCommerce partner's proprietary platform.

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Process

After investigating several eCommerce platforms known in the wine industry, and speaking to several satisfied clients, Krupp Brothers decided to partner with Nexternal for their eCommerce needs. The Nexternal designers got to work on the store, coding the store design to match the winery's existing website, bringing in colors, fonts, logos and other branding elements. Brian Thompson, Regional Sales Manager for Krupp Brothers, worked closely with his dedicated Nexternal account manager to dial in appropriate settings, set up shipping, credit card processing, products and pricing, and to import the existing customer database.

Result

The store launched in early 2008, and within just a few days, the company had sold several thousand dollars worth of wine. Since adding the store, Krupp Brothers' direct-to-consumer sales segment has grown from "almost nothing", up to an impressive 35% of the business. The company also has added a wine club, which includes an online signup option, and the immediate ability to shop online with exclusive wine club discount and member benefits. The wine club already boasts over 500 members and counting.

When asked to identify their favorite attributes of their Nexternal store, the first response was excellent support. "Our account manager is fantastic. She checks in with us, makes sure we are okay, and tells us when Nexternal has added a feature to the system that might be beneficial to our business. You just don't see that level of service too often these days," said Mr. Thompson. The company is also very pleased with the system's ease of use from end to end, such that a new winery employee can quickly adopt it without significant training, and customers use it easily without confusion. The winery also praises the fact that the system is constantly being upgraded and improved. Krupp Brothers has the intention to grow its direct-to-consumer segment even more dramatically in the coming years.

