

Distributor Achieves Greater Visibility and Fortifies Supplier Relationships

Republic National Distributing Company

Atlanta, GA



CASE STUDY

Client Profile

RNDC is the second largest beverage alcohol distributor of wine and spirits in the U.S. with wholly-owned operations in 20 US states and venture partnership operations in three others. In total, RNDC employs more than 9,000 individuals nationwide.

Business Challenge

Like most beverage alcohol distributors, RNDC was grappling with the consequences of the rapid and ongoing consolidation of beverage supplier organizations among the producers of beer, wine, and spirits who seek more consistent and manageable go-to-market strategies as they consider wholesaler options around the country. Widespread consolidation continues to drive stiff competition among distributors for access to a shrinking pool of suppliers in possession of expanding product portfolios. As a result, distributors like RNDC have an incentive to not only improve their field sales execution performance through more collaborative and strategic selling capabilities but also enhance the transparency to their key performance indicators (KPI) data and analytics outputs. Simply sharing depletions and other traditional metrics focused on lagging indicators was no longer enough for distributors operating in a highly competitive environment.

In addition to the macro forces driving the opportunity for RNDC, their internal processes were somewhat fragmented with sales operations in disparate markets pursuing different strategies, KPIs and methodologies for executing. Sales incentives and compensation were not optimized against strategic imperatives in a consistent manner and mostly focused on metrics that were easily measured like depletions and other lagging indicators.

From a technology standpoint, a similar ad-hoc approach resulted in the use of a patchwork of tools and tech. Several different supplier managed solutions were used by RNDC to track customer activity. In addition, RNDC also leveraged locally developed Excel spreadsheets to track and manage KPIs and other programs. This fragmented array of tools and technologies delivered no centralized management, capture or review of sales activity data across the entire organization. As a result, RNDC could not easily provide supplier partners with the analytics they desired to validate performance against brand building strategies .

HIGHLIGHTS

Customer

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Challenge

- Seeking a more collaborative sales execution strategy
- Requiring greater transparency to KPI data and analytics
- Sales incentives and compensation not optimized
- No centralized platform; relying on multiple supplier managed solutions to track customer activity
- Unable to leverage data for optimal results with current solutions

Solution

- Apply a single, standardized process across entire field sales operation
- Offer greater visibility into leading indicators that deliver highly targeted results
- Leverage GreatVines survey features to refine efforts accordingly
- Build surveys collaboratively with suppliers to ensure strategic alignment and KPI development and measurement

Results

- Streamlined activity across each market in the country
- Continuous improvement at the account level, benefiting sales reps, RNDC and suppliers alike
- Increased cohesion and cross-training capacity across entire field sales organization
- Strategic KPI development and measurement via automated activity tracking process
- Improved supplier collaboration through data sharing and visibility into real-time performance against KPIs

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RNDC sales leadership realized their continued and future success would increasingly rely upon more strategic execution with consistent visibility. Not only into what was being sold, but how it was being sold and how sales activity in any given market was being supported. In short, they needed to improve their ability to execute strategically as a company, leveraging data to deliver optimal results to their customers and partnerships with suppliers.

With a long history of success but also a keen sensitivity to the evolution taking place in their industry, a clear-headed assessment of their existing strengths and weaknesses led RNDC to embark on a plan to become a better partner to their base of suppliers. Their plan required improving their ability to execute on the strategic direction provided by suppliers – collaboratively and as a unified team.

Solution

RNDC selected the GreatVines beverage selling platform to apply a single, standardized process across their entire field sales operation. Having all their execution data programmed and logged in a centralized solution enabled RNDC to achieve the data visibility required to perform at a much higher level.

With the newly achieved precision and visibility into sales and marketing activities and data, RNDC was able to begin driving sales based upon the leading indicators that deliver highly targeted and sustained efforts and results. The RNDC team leveraged the Survey features in GreatVines to focus their sales teams against particular activities such as quality distribution, in-store visibility/displays, menu features, tastings, and other strategic activities, measuring how well-planned activities were being activated. Moreover, they gained the capacity to tie survey results back to specific account sales for a very detailed view into where efforts were succeeding and where they needed to be refined/revised. With all this data easily accessible in the cloud, RNDC was able to build their surveys collaboratively with suppliers, ensuring proper alignment between supplier strategy and distribution execution including joint development and measurement of KPIs in an automated fashion.

RNDC also embraced the Account Photos features in GreatVines enabling sales leaders to show suppliers that end-caps, displays and other supplier-mandated promotions were being fully and properly executed with photographic evidence. opportunity information, sales results versus activity and other critical metrics needed to enforce KPIs all within the application.

Results

In sum, the centralization and standardization of data collection has been a boon for RNDC. The leadership they have shown with these important enhancements has set them apart from their competition. With widespread embrace and adoption reported by more than half of all their employees, RNDC is better able to ensure continuity of activity across each market in the country. The newly found precision and scale to which they

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can now execute has delivered continuous improvement at the account level, paying off rewards to sales reps, RNDC as a company and their suppliers alike.

An additional benefit is the ongoing continuity and critical information shared between resources. When staff turnover occurs, sales reps change accounts or reps are out of the office, the data is still accessible and provides a solid basis for knowledge transfer to new personnel. This enables increased cohesion and cross-training capacity across the entire field sales organization.

RNDC has replaced less informative business reviews with highly productive planning meetings around KPI execution and results leveraging real data. Setting of KPIs is now done in a highly relevant and strategic manner with automated activity tracking processes in place to review and improve with purpose.

The sharing of reports and dashboard embedded in the GreatVines solution enables real-time visibility into stats and data on the results of all activities. But RNDC is taking the next step in furthering supplier collaboration by leveraging BevPath, a data sharing solution from GreatVines designed to give suppliers direct visibility into the performance against their KPIs in real-time.

Overall, RNDC is experiencing very positive returns on their investment into beverage sales process automation, improved relationships with suppliers and more proactive overall sales activity. The RNDC team has identified trade promotion management in GreatVines as their next step in fully engaging their solution. Deploying this module of the solution promises improved management of funds expended on promotions put forward by both suppliers and RNDC, and will ensure this spend is accurately applied, tracked, measured and optimized.

"We began the partnership to provide a salesforce automation tool to nearly 1,000 sales reps and managers. We have been able to build an effective, efficient, and extremely powerful tool that has increased our sales and profitability each month since its implementation. We have been tremendously pleased with the GreatVines system, and very pleased with the partnership. GreatVines customer service is outstanding, and they are truly partners in every sense of the word. I highly recommend their product, their people, and their company."

– Jay Finnigan, Republic National Distributing Company