



# Beer Cartel

Beer Cartel uses Searchspring to ensure shoppers always find in-stock products, and can easily navigate and filter different categories.

## CASE STUDY



**Platform:** BigCommerce

**Industry:** Food & Beverage

**Visit:** [beercartel.com.au](https://beercartel.com.au)

**22%**

of revenue attributed  
to search

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*“If you have a broad product range, if you have customers that are really specific about the products that they’re looking for, Searchspring is a fantastic solution. The growth we experienced during the pandemic wouldn’t have been half as strong had we not been able to leverage Searchspring.”*

Richard Kelsey, Director, Beer Cartel

# THE BRAND

Beer Cartel is an Australian retailer dedicated to introducing craft beers from across Australia and all over the world to their loyal beer enthusiast customers.

The business launched in 2009, at a time when alcohol wasn't widely available to purchase online, and operated out of a tiny Kennards Storage shed as a monthly beer club subscription service. Two years later, they opened a small brick-and-mortar store in Sydney, with a large warehouse to support their growing ecommerce sales. "From there we've really focused on the online side of the business, that generates about 90% of our revenue," says Richard Kelsey, Director of Beer Cartel.

With in-depth content and resources on their site – including a podcast dedicated to craft beers – the team is invested in educating customers who may be relatively new to their product range. "People come to us after they've dipped their toe in the water with craft beer," says Richard. They might try one of the more mainstream craft beers out there, enjoy it, and then go down a path of learning about the different styles available. We're all about that exploration, we provide both the educational and experiential elements of discovering these amazing beers."







# THE CHALLENGES

As craft beer grows in popularity, it's increasingly important for Beer Cartel to highlight their value proposition online. "We continue to see lots of smaller players starting up in the industry, so we need to reinforce our point of difference and give customers a reason to come to us," says Richard.

A significant factor in this differentiation is the online shopping experience, and ensuring shoppers can find the products they're looking for. "We have about 1,000 different beers onsite at any one time, and we get 20-30 new beers on the site every week. With changing inventory and customers buying up new arrivals very quickly, we were encountering an issue with out-of-stock products taking up valuable space on search and category pages. To customers, it would often seem like we didn't have any products in stock."

This problem was exacerbated by limited filtering capabilities on the site. "If you clicked on one category, take beers from New Zealand as an example, you couldn't then narrow down those products to just IPAs. Shoppers weren't able to drill down to the results they were most interested in."

Increased demand as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions put added pressure on the business in 2020, but ultimately generated a substantial increase in sales. "Almost overnight, we went from doing 50 orders in a standard day to 200+. We had a shutdown of bars during the first wave, and people were nervous about going to physical stores, so they went online to buy things like beer. We filled a need there, and after seeing how easy it was to buy beer online, many people have continued to do so."



# THE SOLUTIONS

Beer Cartel integrated Searchspring on their BigCommerce site in late 2019, giving them time to prepare for the busy Christmas holiday season. “Searchspring addressed our issues with out-of-stock products dominating category and search result pages straight away. Shoppers could quickly find products that were available for purchase, and our range suddenly looked much bigger and better stocked,” says Richard.

“The new facets on the site allow customers to filter by multiple styles of beer at once instead of being restricted to just one category. From there, shoppers can further narrow their search by price, alcohol percentage, can vs. bottle, and so on. All of these improvements mean that it’s much easier and faster for customers to find exactly what they’re looking for.”

Holidays and other special occasions typically lead to a surge in orders for Beer Cartel, and the site can now be updated and customized in response. “We have two streams of customers, people who are buying for themselves and people who are buying gifts. With gifts, we’re now able to tailor our categories based on the time of the year. For Valentine’s Day, we were able to instantly place all of our Valentine’s gifts at the top of relevant pages, which made a huge difference. Being able to control the order of products in different categories was something we were never able to do before.”

These seasonal spikes in traffic turned into a prolonged period of heightened demand when COVID-19 hit. “The growth we experienced during the pandemic wouldn’t have been half as strong had we not been able to leverage Searchspring,” says Richard. “We had a massive year, we grew the business by something like 80%. Now, it’s all about maintaining that growth.”





# THE RESULTS

“We get a lot of positive feedback about the site these days, compared to when our support line used to get swamped by customers that were struggling to find what they were looking for. Our returning visitors are up, which means the site is doing the job it’s meant to do in building and maintaining a loyal customer base. Search and navigation plays such a huge role in that.”

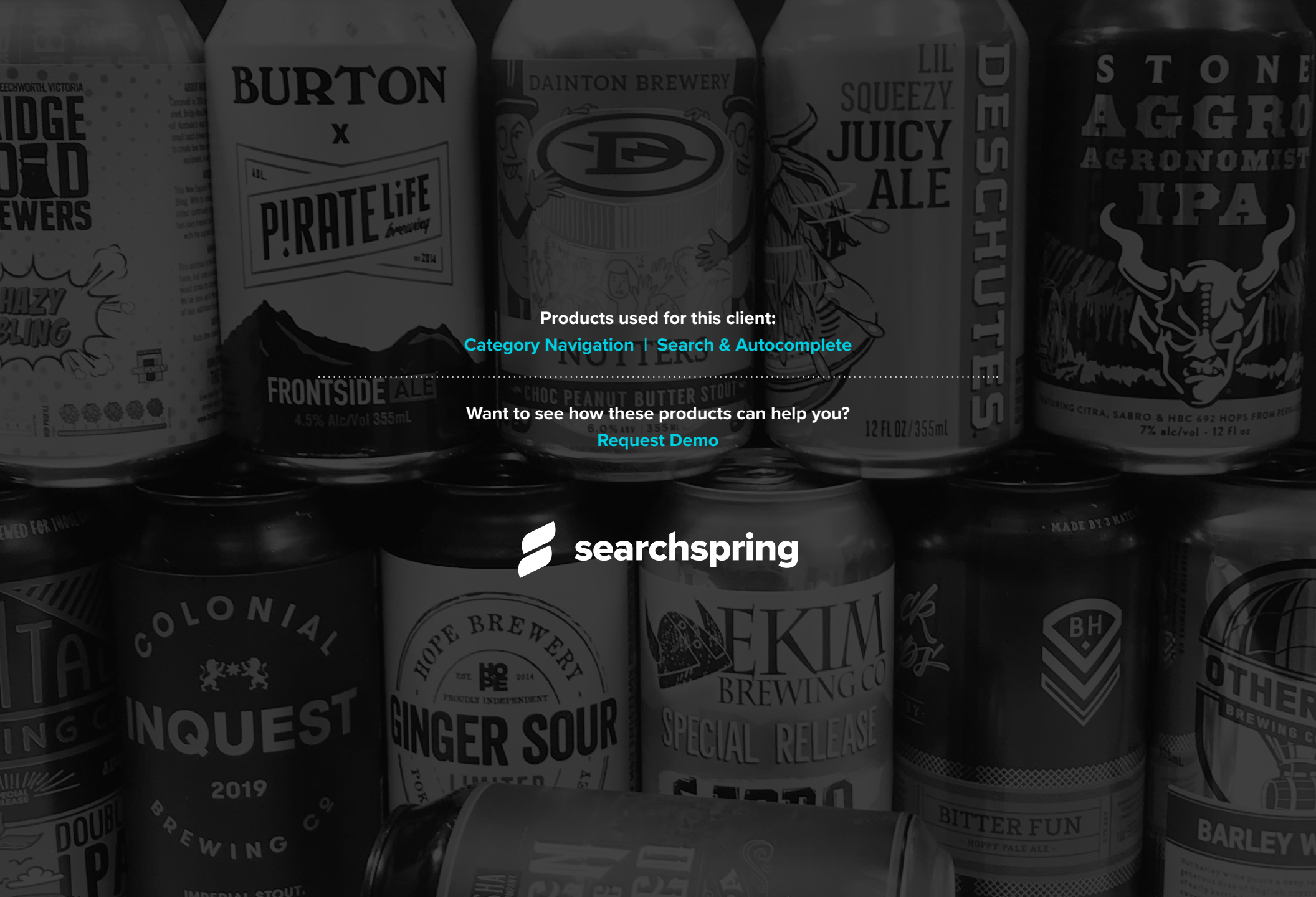
In 2020 8% of Beer Cartel shoppers used search. That 8% generated:

Conversion rates that were

**3x**  
higher.

**22%**  
of revenue.





Products used for this client:

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