

Buttonwood Grove Winery

Award Winning Winery Boosts Revenue and Improves Customer Engagement with End-to-End Integration and Automation across Point-of-Sale, eCommerce and QuickBooks Online

BENEFITS

- Improved ability to create long-term customer relationships through direct marketing
- TrueCommerce Nexternal integration with UPS WorldShip makes printing shipping labels a one-click process
- Built-in integration capability to support future growth, such as the addition of age verification and production data management solutions



OBJECTIVE

- ▶ Automate labor-intensive manual tasks, improve business reporting capabilities and facilitate customer relationship management by investing in best-in-class, integrated technology

SOLUTION

- ▶ Leverage WineryConnect to implement, connect and support a Revel point-of-sale (POS) solution, TrueCommerce Nexternal eCommerce storefront and wine club platform—all integrated with the QuickBooks Online business system

BENEFITS

- ▶ “Huge” bottom-line revenue impact through an exponential increase in online sales and enhanced marketing capabilities
- ▶ Ultra-fast deployment and near-instant time-to-value for both POS and eCommerce solutions
- ▶ TrueCommerce Nexternal's built-in wine club and customer management features have helped kick off a highly successful and fast-growing wine club subscription service

BACKGROUND

Buttonwood Grove Winery produces some of the most exceptional wines in New York's Finger Lakes region, and is also known for its outstanding events and accommodations. Winner of the 2017 Governor's Cup for the best wine in New York state, Buttonwood Grove was also recently chosen as one of the world's top 10 vineyard vacation destinations by Robert Parker's Wine Journal.

When Buttonwood Grove's current owners, David and Melissa Pittard, purchased the winery in 2014, there was little in the way of information technology to support the business. Retail store and tasting room sales were rung up on “old-school” cash registers, and there was no integration between online or on-site sales channels and the QuickBooks Online business system. This high-effort scenario made it difficult to grow the business or to develop customer-centric marketing strategies.

Buttonwood Grove initially partnered with the “winery intelligence” managed service specialists at WineryConnect, based in nearby Geneva, NY, to implement a modern POS system based on the best-of-breed Revel platform, including integration with QuickBooks.

The three-station rollout took under a week. The integrated system initially handled weddings and other events, lodging, a gift shop and on-site wine sales. Food service and a fourth, mobile POS station were added soon after.

UPGRADING AND INTEGRATING THE ONLINE SALES CHANNEL

In 2017, Buttonwood Grove was ready to take its online sales to the next level by starting a wine club and upgrading its online store. WineryConnect recommended the TrueCommerce Nexternal eCommerce platform because of its strong presence in the wine industry, including a proven and full-featured wine club module.

WineryConnect also offered built-in integrations with both Revel and QuickBooks Online—creating an optimized winery ecosystem of integrated solutions configured and supported by WineryConnect's expert Grape Squad.

Once again, the rollout was smooth, taking less than two weeks from start to finish. The winery now enjoys seamless integration and synchronization of customer and product data between its POS, eCommerce storefront and QuickBooks.

WineryConnect technology pushes online orders to Revel for unified inventory control and financial reporting. “Revel's inventory management capabilities include specific features wineries need,” says David Pittard, owner. “These include support for multiple hospitality and retail establishments and things like excise tax reporting and bonded wine storage.”

Another big time-saver is TrueCommerce Nexternal's built-in integration with UPS. “In the past, we'd have to login to the UPS system and type in all the recipients' information before we could print labels,”



Ms. Klue recalls. "Now I just click a button and out comes a UPS label."

BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS

A major benefit of the three-way integration between Revel, TrueCommerce Nexternal and QuickBooks is the ability to smoothly and effectively manage customer relationships.

"Our customers can make purchases in our tasting room, or they can buy from home using TrueCommerce Nexternal—and all the data is housed and managed together," explains Marcia Klue, Marketing Manager and Wine Club Director. "This allows us to track their wine preferences and buying patterns, then market to them directly, regardless of whether they buy in our store or online."

Ms. Klue continues: "For instance, because TrueCommerce Nexternal's customer management system integrates with our MailChimp customer database, I can easily use MailChimp to send a promotional email to people who consistently order dry reds, inviting them to be among the first to try a new Cabernet Sauvignon vintage—that's very exciting."

The integrated solution improves customer interaction, both on and offline.

"Our system also makes things easier for the customer," Ms. Klue emphasizes. "Because the programs all talk to each other, even if you've only purchased online, any wine club benefits and discounts you're entitled to are managed automatically when you walk into our tasting room—without us having to manually track things or go from one system to another."

And, it makes every wine club member feel special.

"We had a guest here who, unbeknownst to me, was a wine club member," adds Mr. Pittard. "She was checking out from an overnight stay in one of our cabins, and also purchased some wine. The system recognized her and applied all the appropriate discounts and benefits without me even knowing who she was."

A WILDLY SUCCESSFUL WINE CLUB

Buttonwood Grove launched its wine club in mid-November 2017, with the first shipment going out in January 2018.

"Our wine club has been successful beyond our wildest dreams," Ms. Klue relates. "We had over 50 people sign up for our first shipment, which blew us away."

That was just the beginning. The revenue hiked, with minimal marketing investments.

"Our second shipment went out in April to about 90 people, and currently we have about 150 wine club members," describes Ms. Klue. "That's with pretty much no advertising, except for boosting a few posts on Facebook and talking face-to-face with customers in our tasting room and at offsite events."

The program proved to be an effective loyalty building tool.

"The additional revenue has been huge for us, but building relationships with our customers is the longer-term benefit," Ms. Klue clarifies. "It's about becoming part of something special; part of a club."

TrueCommerce Nexternal has proven to be easy for both customers and staff to use.

"I'm only just beginning to appreciate some of TrueCommerce Nexternal's great features," mentions Ms. Klue. "For example, I love that I can run a credit card report shortly before a wine club shipment, so I can proactively contact members whose cards have expired."

EXPONENTIAL INCREASE IN ONLINE REVENUE

In addition to a minimum four online orders per year from each of its 100+ wine club members, Buttonwood Grove currently receives about three to four online orders in an average week. In the few months that their TrueCommerce Nexternal storefront has been up-and-running, online sales have generated more revenue than the winery made online in the previous 10 years combined.

Buttonwood Grove's wine club contributes to both sides of this winning equation.

"Many of our online orders are from wine club members making purchases in addition to their wine club shipments," indicates Ms. Klue. "Likewise, anyone who buys online gets a wine club flyer and a pretty high percentage of those people go on to join the wine club."

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FUTURE PLANS

Buttonwood Grove currently ships to nine states besides New York and is looking into selling to several more states in the future.

“The word is spreading about what a great wine club we have, and people just keep calling and wanting us to ship to them, too,” Ms. Klue says. “To help automate the compliance and age verification processes across different states, we’ve recently started the installation of the ShipCompliant solution.”

TrueCommerce Nexternal has long offered an integration with ShipCompliant.

“We’ve also talked about some other projects that WineryConnect can help us with around the winery in the future, such as production data management,” notes Mr. Pittard.

LONG-TERM TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS

“At this point, we rely on WineryConnect for technical support across our entire winery operation,” observes Mr. Pittard. “When we have questions, we call the Grape Squad.”

The integrated support approach makes the winery operations more effective.

“We wouldn’t have this great setup with Revel, TrueCommerce Nexternal and QuickBooks if it wasn’t for WineryConnect,” Mr. Pittard acknowledges. “They’ve taken us from zero technology to almost flawless integration from customer interaction to reporting through QuickBooks to bank deposits.”

The TrueCommerce Nexternal team is always there to help with the e-commerce part of the ecosystem.

“Our relationship with TrueCommerce Nexternal has also been very, very successful,” describes Ms. Klue. “Our TrueCommerce Nexternal representative has worked very closely with me, and even made a visit to our tasting room to get to know us better. That personal connection is so important.”

Several other wineries in the Finger Lakes region are now also using TrueCommerce Nexternal.

“We would absolutely recommend a technology ecosystem like ours to other wineries—as long as they don’t use it to become more successful than we are!” Ms. Klue jokes.



ABOUT TRUECOMMERCE

TrueCommerce revolutionizes trading partner connectivity, visibility, and collaboration by linking suppliers, retail hubs and end consumers in one global commerce network. From the factory to the warehouse, from distributor to retail storefront, achieve new levels of business connectivity and performance with the world’s most complete commerce network.

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