

Alcohol Delivery App Drizly's CMO on 'Stupendous' Growth and What's Next

The meteoric rise of ecommerce has been one of the biggest stories of the pandemic era. Brands with strong ecommerce platforms prior to Covid-19 benefited enormously from that foresight, while those that didn't either fell behind or had to make a quick pivot.

Still others had to develop an ecommerce strategy for industries that either had not allowed it previously, or made it very complicated—like alcohol. In a heavily regulated industry like the booze business, many retailers needed outside support to build up a delivery service that would abide by regional laws. Enter Drizly.

The platform connects retailers to consumers, giving them the framework needed to implement their own delivery services. And as soon as lockdown was implemented across the country, business exploded for Drizly.

"Right around March 14, or something like that, it just went through the roof," Drizly CMO Scott Braun told reporter Ryan Barwick during Adweek's eCommerce, CPG and Retail Performance Marketing Live Virtual Summit. "And then we never looked back."

But that doesn't mean everything was going great. While Drizly had found itself at the crux of skyrocketing demand from people experiencing a global health crisis—beverages to help people cope and a service that allows them to stay home—the team was still operating under the same stress and chaos that everyone else was, especially in those early, uncertain days.

Braun said one of the most important things was to ensure he

was acting as a human leader, checking in on folks regularly and making sure they got some time off in the midst of the chaos.

And while retailers welcomed the increased business, the demand was difficult to match with such short expected turnaround. With so many more people stocking up to drink at home, stores were working around the clock to keep up.

“No business is ready for 800% growth, literally overnight,” said Braun. “It’s pretty hard to cope with that overnight and make sure things go off seamlessly.”

Growth has remained steady thanks to the huge increase in awareness of alcohol delivery in the first few months of the pandemic. And the novel coronavirus is still sending drinkers back into lockdown in certain parts of the country in a risk-mitigation game that’s likely to continue well into next year.

Assuming this will all be over eventually, Drizly is also thinking hard about the long-term value it can bring to folks even after they’re allowed to regularly drink in bars and restaurants again. For Braun, that means focusing on improving the customer experience by improving delivery times, ensuring that products are in stock when customers want them and that there’s a wide variety of inventory available.

Drizly also recently launched a consumer insights arm, BevAlc, to share the data it tracks through the platform. Through this, and through the opportunities for promotion it can provide to brands by operating outside the three-tiered regulatory system, Drizly aims to become a thought leader and resource for its industry partners.

“We really think that we can be a hub for insights—both for suppliers and retailers, and for consumers,” Braun said.

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