



NINKASI BREWING COMPANY CASE STUDY

Zoey replaces custom-built solution, driving sales efficiency and more accurate reporting

The Company



Ninkasi Brewing Company

Founded in 2006, 150 employees

www.ninkasibrewing.com

What They Like About Zoey

1. They were able to get the store set up with real data and demonstrate it to internal stakeholders and customers before making a decision.
2. Zoey support began before the sale, resolving store build-out issues without a single payment made.
3. Customers have taken quickly to it, finding it very simple to use and navigate.
4. Data is available much more readily, allowing reports to be pulled in minutes, and providing more visibility to the team.
5. Data accessibility allows it to easily work with other tools they use today, and will allow for their new ERP to connect as well when ready.

The Challenge

Their custom-developed order portal failed, and a second custom project to rebuild it was moving too slowly. The team at Ninkasi Brewing Company decided to look to off-the-shelf options to see if they could accomplish what was needed, and found Zoey was up for the job.

The Success

- 95 percent of their distributors adopted the self-service ordering portal within a few weeks of complete rollout
- Salespeople have more visibility into who has placed their orders, ensuring they know who needs attention; pulling internal reports is equally simple and offers further visibility
- Pallet spot-based purchase model makes it much easier for all involved, and didn't require any customization, just configuration
- The journey from finding Zoey to being ready to launch their order portal was completed in about 10 weeks, including the time needed to make a decision, and despite another project going on concurrently.

What Makes Them Special

Based out of Eugene Oregon, Ninkasi Brewing Company is independently owned and one of the top 50 craft breweries in the United States. They offer a mix of seasonal, limited run and year-round beers, both at their Better Living Room in Eugene and through stores, restaurants and more.



Contact us for a personalized demo!
www.zoey.com • info@zoey.com • 855-446-1200

By the Numbers

95%

OF DISTRIBUTORS PLACING
ORDERS ON ZOELY

10

WEEKS FROM FINDING ZOELY
TO BEING READY FOR LAUNCH

How it Happened

Ninkasi Brewing Company had been taking orders from their distributors online through a custom made order portal, but it went down and they began the process of looking at another custom-built solution to take its place. However, as the process dragged on, and they learned about the limitations they'd be forced to accept, they decided it wasn't the right approach.

Meghan Farmer Smith, Distributor Ordering & Inventory Coordinator for Ninkasi Brewing Co., said the custom build they were pursuing wasn't going to work out. "We wouldn't have access to go in and make additions and alterations to the platform. Everything had to be done through them with a request. Our inventory and new products change so much, and we wanted to utilize this as a tool to communicate to our distributors, our customers, so having access to go in right away to make changes was really important to us."

So a new search began, one where they examined off-the-shelf possibilities, and other build options, to see what was available. Unfortunately, those other options proved equally limiting.

"We tried to talk to Shopify and they were really slow on getting back to us," said Becca Livingston, Business Intelligence Manager for Ninkasi Brewing Co. "We talked to another beer-specific company out of Oregon. They also wouldn't customize anything for us, not that our customizations are really in depth, but some minor things. Then we had also talked to this start-up out of California to see if they could help develop something for us. The cost just didn't make sense with them."

During this search, they found Zoely. "Zoely popped up, and there was the free trial," Livingston said. "It was really easy to use. It made sense to me right away on how to put the orders in and build the site ourselves."

Configuration, Not Customization

A feature within Zoely that allowed for customizing the pricing model proved to be a key find for the team. "We quickly realized we could make use of the pricing promotion in a different way to capture pallet spots instead of price, which is critical for shipping to our distributors," Livingston said. "Most are not worried about the price, they're worried about filling up the truck, having pallet spots. We were interested in making particular use of that in Zoely."

In Their Words

“We went back a lot of different times with Uri, configured things a different way, so we could do a big demo for the rest of the team with a real site, with our products in there.

“It was super easy to take it to the decision makers. ‘Here’s an order portal that has all of our requirements built in and working.’ It made it easier for the decision makers to say yes, let’s move forward. ...

“We found it in December; we signed on probably by the end of January. By the end of February, we had everything in there.”

Becca Livingston, Business Intelligence Manager



Livingston added that around the same time, she heard from company founder Uri Fook to offer assistance. “Uri called me before I ever really had a chance to ask any questions. He called me and just wanted to make sure there was nothing waiting for us, anything holding us back. I was able to tell him, ‘Actually, there’s a few things.’

“It was easy to create the site, but there were a few things I didn’t know if we could get it to work how we needed it. Within a day he reached back out, and said now it’s working that way. We had not had that kind of service yet; that made a big difference. Knowing we could get that kind of support moving forward gave [Zoey] a lot of points there.”

Livingston noted the flexibility of Zoey made it easy to navigate and ensure it would work for the business.

“It really shows how properly designed the configuration was built,” she said. “While it feels like a customization for us, it’s a configuration in the system. Zoey didn’t have to code anything specifically for us, which was really great.”

A Thorough Vetting by Stakeholders

Ninkasi Brewing went through a vetting process that included presenting Zoey to a number of internal and external stakeholders. For internal stakeholders, Zoey support made it easy to get a working example set up quickly.

“We went back a lot of different times with Uri, configured things a different way, so we could do a big demo for the rest of the team with a real site, with our products in there,” Livingston said. “It was super easy to take it to the decision makers. ‘Here’s an order portal that has all of our requirements built in and working.’ It made it easier for the decision makers to say yes, let’s move forward.”

They also did a test with three of their largest distributors, and the feedback was strong, which confirmed they had found their solution. And the entire process was quick.

“We found it in December; we signed on probably by the end of January,” Livingston said. “By the end of February, we had everything in there.”

In Their Words

“Anytime I have a question or I’m trying to figure something out, I first go to the Support option of Zoey. I use that as a reference to this day to remind myself how to do something or look something up.

“When I submit a support ticket, usually within the day I hear back. It’s always so awesome. Even if it’s as simple as walking me through a process that’s in the support materials, they’ve never had a problem explaining to me how to get something set up.”

“They’re always pretty fast. I appreciate that.”

Meghan Farmer Smith, Distributor Ordering & Inventory Coordinator



Quick Adoption, by Customers and by Ninkasi Brewing

By early June, more than 95 percent of Ninkasi Brewing’s distributors were placing orders in Zoey. Part of the immediate adoption success came from a tutorial video produced in house to help distributors get started, Smith said. “Our sales team was able to send it out to each of our customers to personalize the experience, and open up any conversation about questions they may have. We were able to roll it out over the course of a week or two weeks as the emails went out with the video.”

To further help their customers, during a transition period, Smith entered orders by hand into Zoey, so an order history would be present at launch.

Among the capabilities Ninkasi Brewing has leveraged is the ability to take pre-orders. “Pre-orders was not on our initial list of requirements,” Livingston said. “We found we can announce a product is available on a certain date and gather pre-orders. It’s not something we sought out specifically, but it’s available and we can make use of it.”

Smith said that being able to link to brand assets also has been quite helpful. “Another cool thing is the way that the customer descriptions link to our brand folder. It offers a huge resource for our distributors. It features sales information on all of our brands, and they can even order things like tap stickers and sales support like posters and pennants to use out in the market.

“Having that right there in Zoey is quite helpful. It makes it a one-stop shop for our distributors. Pull up a different tab, follow a link and they’re there.”

Centralized Information

Having the data in one place has increased visibility. Smith said they gave their sales team access to Zoey, which allows them to “see what their customer has on order, start communications and conversations with them about promotions we’re running, and help them maximize the efficiency of their current order.

“Before, our sales team didn’t have a lot of visibility of what they had on order. Any questions had to go through me, and now they can pull up the website and see order dates and quantities. It saves a lot of time for our sales team.”

Smith said the data accessibility helps her, too. “Right now, the Zoey portal has been key for visibility and for being able to pull a report. Previously, the visibility for what we had on order was pretty lacking. Now I can pull a report, and share with the leadership team what we have available. It’s a lot more streamlined to do that than our previous process.”

Zoey being a web-based platform also means she can pull data on the fly. “I can be in the middle of a meeting, hop on to Zoey, export order data in a certain date range, and within minutes have an answer of what we have on order for a particular brand and package.”

Smith is also leveraging Zoey’s Order Attachments feature to attach files from another system to Zoey orders. “In our internal system, when I enter an order in our ERP, it generates a PDF that our distributors reference when reviewing the confirmation email.

“I’m now going directly into the orders and attaching the PDFs to the order. I can go back to order history in Zoey, and can pull the PDF without having to search through emails.”

Flexible Data Structure

Zoey’s flexible product attributes means that they can build out their products in Zoey in a way that can make it understandable to their other systems. Livingston said she is able to “tie Zoey into other sources and join tables together. It’s really unique from a reporting standpoint. We have different sources of data, with unique IDs for each item. The ability to add as many attributes as we wanted was incredibly useful from a reporting aspect.”

Ninkasi Brewing Company is in the process of adopting Microsoft Business Central. Once the ERP goes live, they’ll be able to connect the systems and have more direct data flowing back and forth, further improving the internal data processes.

Post-launch, the Ninkasi Brewing Co. team says support has been as strong as ever, and that has ensured a smooth launch and beyond.

“Anytime I have a question or I’m trying to figure something out, I first go to the Support option of Zoey,” Smith said. “I use that as a reference to this day to remind myself how to do something or look something up. When I submit a support ticket, usually within the day I hear back. It’s always so awesome. Even if it’s as simple as walking me through a process that’s in the support materials, they’ve never had a problem explaining to me how to get something set up. They’re always pretty fast. I appreciate that.”

Smith added, “We can customize a lot of this to our needs, which is awesome for something already set up. It wasn’t built for us but looks like it was.”

About Zoey

Zoey is a powerful eCommerce solution for B2B and wholesale businesses. We offer three major solutions to run a business: A mobile app for taking orders on the go, a self-service web portal for eCommerce, and a web-based admin for product, customer and order management. Our features include net terms and credit limits, sales quote generation, customer groups, access restrictions, and quick order capabilities.



www.zoey.com
info@zoey.com
855-446-1200