

How to improve your digital transformation – Brewery Pro podcast transcript

Matt Kirkegaard: My name's Matt Kirkegaard. I'm a beer writer. That is actually a thing. Thanks to people like Scott today. And thanks to Cloud Culture, I'm here virtually having a beer with you all and Scott Brandon, founder of Bright Brewery in the Victorian high country, who I've had the pleasure of chatting with a number of occasions. I'm really pleased to be back at doing that again. And we're here to talk a little bit about Scott's business journey and particularly how the business has evolved and grown, and particularly with partners such as Cloud Culture. So we can learn a little bit more about that whilst having a couple of beers, and I can guarantee that the beers are going to be probably even as interesting, if not more so, than Scott's journey. Scott, welcome. Thank you for having us.

Scott Brandon: Great to see you again, Matt and great to have this opportunity to go through this with everybody.

MK: And the last time I was down was just after the, actually it was just between the bush fires and the COVID lockdowns.

SB: I know.

MK: It was a very, very brief respite between the two of them.

SB: Yeah. Crazy times, huh?

MK: But before, how about we get started with the beer, so talk us through which one we're going to be trying first.

SB: Which one did you want to do? The [crosstalk] What do you think? I think we'll start with the Raspberry Sweetheart. It's just a nice refreshing sour ale. So some people may not be familiar with these styles. They're a very different flavored beer with this. They work quite well with fruits in them, they have a bit of a tart edge to them. So that makes them a little bit, I guess, more refreshing or pallet cleansing if you like, and pretty easy to knock back. And this is a very approachable version for the sour ale.

MK: Well, we might just actually get a couple of housekeeping things out of the way to begin with because one of the things I hear so often is why pour it into a glass. It comes in a nice package. Why, yet we're all being very, very decorous and pouring our beers into glasses?

SB: Yes. Well, I think this is a leading question, obviously Matt, because you know exactly why, but I guess with bottles, the vessel is okay to drink out of, but the cans are less nice to drink out of just from how your mouth interacts with it, I guess, but there's a lot more to it than that. And when you pour it into a glass, first of all, you get to see the true color of the beer, and that's part of the experience of what you're drinking. And this one's a nice, bright red character. So that kind of, that helps to set up the expectations of what you're about to drink. And then you'll also, as you're pouring it, you'll get some of the aromas starting to come through.

SB: Which does the same type of thing, it helps to set your pallet with expectations of what you're about to experience. So this one, as you're pouring it, it's got quite that fruity sort of raspberry flavor to it. So,

it's kind of setting that there. And then when it's in the glass too, as you lift it to your mouth, part of the sensory experience is through your nose. And when it's in the glass, you get more of that coming out. So I think those are the main reasons for drinking it out of glass. And yeah, it's just the best way to do it.

MK: I do like to say we, because there is a certain amount of theater involved in wine drinking that is about elevating the experience and it is based on good principles. So if you do see us having a little bit of a swirl and a bit of a sniff, we're not auditioning for our cravat fittings or anything like that. As Scott said, there is a very good reason around the aroma. So because this is as much a beer tasting as it is a business learning, if you do see us have a bit of a sniff, that's what that's about, and we encourage you to do the same. See what flavors you get, don't necessarily go down to the front bar of your local and do the same thing. Someone might say something a little bit unkind about you. If you're doing it there, that might be the place just to drink for enjoyment, but for a tasting, feel free to swirl and have a bit of a sniff. So now Scott, tell us a little bit about Bright Brewery, the brewery that these beers all came out of?

SB: Yeah, sure. So we've been going 15 years now. We started with my wife and I and a couple of friends. And it came about shortly after we moved to Bright, which is about three and a half hours north of Melbourne in Victorian high country. So we're nestled in amongst the mountains. We moved up here for the tree change and the mountain country lifestyle. We keen mountain bikers and skiers, and we just like to get out to the mountains and the outdoors. So that was the first reason to move up here. But once we got here, we realized that there was a great opportunity to create a different experience for people in town.

SB: The two very established pubs that have been here for a long time were pretty much the only venues, if you like, that serve beers and that type of thing. And they weren't really conducive to families enjoying them. So we felt, with our own young family, that we could build something that was much more suited to that sort of lifestyle. And so we started planning, we'd actually been home brewing for a few years prior to that. So a lot of these little breweries started up as home brewers, and I guess that sort of gave us an idea to head in that direction.

SB: And so we did a bit of a plan, found a prime block of land in the middle of town. We scraped together all of our savings and bought the block of land and then realized that we didn't actually have any money left to build something to put on it. So we basically, we scrounged up a bit more money and built a little tin shed, and we crammed all the brewing equipment into that and we operated, and Matt's been with us. From that start, I think one of his first visits was just a few years after we'd opened and we literally had all of the brewing equipment behind us with the fermentor's and everything just crammed into this tiny shed with a little bar on the side of it.

SB: But because we had this nice block of land. We had this very nice outdoor beer garden, which was great when the weather was nice, which is most of the time in Bright. But when it rained, it was a bit of a disaster because you'd suddenly have 150 people trying to cram into a room that was about three meters by four. And so we've grown over the years from there.

MK: And that's one of the things that we wanted to talk on today because you paint a picture that it's a very craft beer picture, or garage band picture, home brewers making a bit of a change, but you've grown from those very humble beginnings into a very significant regional business. You've won statewide tourism awards for what you've done. So it hasn't just been, no matter how you started, there has been a lot of thinking and a lot of business sense behind it, hasn't there?

SB: Yeah, that's right. And I guess we are lucky because my wife, who's a very organized person, and she made us write a business plan and she was fantastic at writing grant applications and scraping together any funding that we could get our hands on, and very organized in the way that she approached it. And eventually some of that started to rub off on me and I've been able to continue that and we're constantly reinvesting in the business, really looking at how we do things and trying to do them as well as we possibly can, to I guess, what we are is bigger than just a business, we're really an integral part of our town now.

SB: And we support a lot of events in town where we're really proactive in the direction that the town takes. The town has become much more of an outdoors focused town over the last 15 years that we've been here and the brewery's been a fairly integral part of that. So it's really satisfying to see all of that come together and over the years we've built a very professional team of people. And so that helps to keep that professional approach and that ideal moving in the right direction when you've got the right people working for you, which we have now.

MK: And I should just say that there are chat available, so if anyone's got any questions they would like relayed to Scott or anything that we move on from without actually having answered your question, please feel free to just pop something in the chat room and I will relay them and also go back to some of them at the end of the session. Scott, one of the things that you just said is how central Bright Brewing is to the city of Bright or the town of Bright. Was that something you set out to do, or have you grown into that role as the town has grown and embraced you?

SB: I think we kind of set out to do it, to be honest. When we moved here, there was a small group of locals who were heavily involved in the outdoors just because it's right at the doorstep, but it didn't really feel like it was the tourism focus for the town. And so, I guess-

MK: Sorry, don't mean to jump in, but I think you'd actually described it the first time that we came. It was almost the halfway point where people just stopped on their way to the ski fields, it wasn't a destination in itself.

SB: Yeah, that's right. It's the gateway to the mountains. But I think a lot of the people who were running businesses in the town hadn't really picked up that that was a significant market because most people would come through, they might stop for a quick meal or something like that. But then they'll go through and go and climb Mount Feathertop, or go up to the ski fields or ride their bikes to beach worth or something like that and wouldn't necessarily spend a lot of time in town. And don't get me wrong, the town has always been popular as a getaway destination for campers over summer, but that has traditionally been quite limited to school holiday periods, long weekends, and those types of times. And the main change we've seen over the last 15 years is a lot more active people moving to the town to live.

SB: One of the things that's really kicked off in the last five years is trail running. And we used to have one or two events throughout the year, over a weekend where people would come and do trail running, but now trail runners are actually moving here and they have a trail [inaudible] thing every Tuesday night and probably 20 or 30 people turning up just to go running every Tuesday.

Steve Ansermino: You don't think it's the beer that's attracting them at the end?

SB: Well, that could be part of it. It certainly helps. But we just wouldn't have seen that 10 years ago.

SA: There might have been.

MK: And I think the last time I was, well, the time before the last time I was down and we actually caught up for a podcast then, there was a running festival and it's something you just don't expect to see people that have just finished a 22 kilometer mountain trail run, hugging, being hugged by their supporters and then heading 20 meters up the hill and sitting and having a beer because the beer lifestyle wasn't always associated with that sort of fitness and that sort of adventure ethic, was it?

SB: No, not really, but I think that's because I don't know, it's a more natural product now, I guess. Like it's a more, I don't know, beer tastes really good after you've done something like that too. Just saying that. Not that I've done any of those big ones, but after doing something we've been out working hard for a few hours.

MK: It tastes pretty good after the gardening, I have to say. So even without the running.

SB: That's right.

MK: So there's a perception that where there's so many breweries opening that it's a business that you just open a brewery and the beer just sells. Was that your experience? Because I know that there was like a slow building period and four or five years ago you ended up opening a larger production brewery in the area as well. Was that growth easy or was it a real challenge to get to that stage?

SB: Certainly at the start it was a real challenge. 15 years ago, craft beer wasn't really on people's radar. And the way I see it is probably 95% of the people who would walk through our front door had never even had a craft beer before. Whereas, maybe five years ago that had turned on its head and 95% of people that came in our front door had, just because breweries are everywhere and you really can't visit a town now without a brewery kind of being the center of it.

SB: Which is great, it means we're getting fresh beer brewed locally. Each one will have its own characteristics and it makes for something that's a little bit interesting to try and beer is no longer a product where it's all the same. Now there's variety in beer, and I think that's one of the, it's not just variety within a brewery, like we've got dozens of different styles of beers that we make. But when you go to a different brewery, they'll often have a slightly different take on how they make their beers. You can often pick that up.

MK: And certainly with beers like the Raspberry Sweetheart sour ale, they're very different to the old one that if you had one, you'd have 10, and I call those the weapons of mass consumption, where you just sort of drinking without too much thinking involved. You can actually just drink these and enjoy them for the very complex flavors, rather than just as a way to get you to a point of lack of sobriety, I guess.

SB: That's right. And what we find too is some people just don't like the flavor of traditional beer, so to be able to make beers like this, that really challenge those perceptions, it actually opens up our market to a lot more people once they've had a chance to try it. This would be one of those beers where you

can give it to somebody who says, nine times out of 10 you can give it to somebody who says, oh, I don't drink beer and they've tried and then realized that, hey, this is actually something I would drink.

SA: That's actually my own story. I wasn't a beer drinker until I started drinking this stuff. And my dad was a brewer, so he would turn in his grave. There's so much more interest in the diversity that's available, like in the mainstream beers, they're in this tiny little narrow range, and then you get beers like this which sit out on the one end of the exciting fringe for me. And then on the other end, the darker beers, you get the, I always thought the dark beer was a Guinness and I thought Guinness was disgusting. And then I started drinking ports and stouts, and I realized they're bloody fantastic. So it just opens your mind that there's this massive range of stuff out there, and it's really enjoyable.

MK: Scott. One of the things, just touching back to the point where you are very central to the community, you take that responsibility very seriously as a brewery, don't you? Not just in being involved as an active participant in the community, but in such a beautiful part of the world, the sustainability of what you do is probably as important as the quality of the beer that you make, is the way that I see your brewery.

SB: Yeah. It is very important to us. I often wish we could do more, I'd love to get the brewery to a carbon neutral or a net zero position, but there's a lot of challenges. Brewing is a very energy intensive process. So, I guess flip side of that is there's a lot of opportunities to try and reduce that, but some of the aspects of the process are very difficult to mitigate that energy consumption. But not necessarily impossible, it's this type of thing that we are constantly striving to achieve, we do feel that, and we've been subject to quite a number of bush fires over the years. I think five since we started, so pretty much one every three years.

SA: So why don't you make a Rauchbier?

SB: We do make a Rauchbier.

SA: Rauchbier is a smoked beer.

SB: Yeah. Not normally during bushfires, no. So, it's very much in our face and so there's a lot of incentive for us to try and do our bit to help with that. And so we do as much as we can, but it extends beyond that too. It's all about not just trying to look after our environment and our town, but the people that work with us, making sure that they're not working excessive hours, that they've actually got the time to enjoy the parts of this town that we get to enjoy as well. So, we're quite particular about making sure that all of our staff, even those working in the kitchen and working a standard 38 hour week or less, just so that they've got that work life balance right. And what we find is that they hang around, like we have very little staff turnover and that's not the only reason, but that certainly helps, that they've got time to enjoy themselves when they're not working.

MK: Sounds like you've got [crosstalk]. And that's why sustainability isn't just about a low carbon footprint, isn't it? Because I believe that you are a, not just a solar farmer these days, you're a worm farmer these days, as well as looking after your staff, and making sure that their lives in the brewery is sustainable.

SB: Yes, that's right. Yeah, exactly. That's exactly what we're trying to do.

MK: So now I'm very conscious with anything to do with alcohol. I don't want to turn this into a boat race, where everyone has to feel that they empty their glass and upended it on their head, but we do have a couple of beers to get through that Steve is very conscious of. So hopefully everyone's got a spare glass and they don't have to finish the first one. What are you going to move us onto second? You might notice as a pro, I just would put a little bit in my glass and I'll go back to the favorite afterwards.

SA: Yeah. Do passion fruit or Haze?

SB: Let's do the passion fruit next.

SA: Okay.

MK: Passion fruit and pale ale, okay.

SB: Yep. We'll go sort of lightest to strongest.

MK: So even the sound of that can opening. You said that it's a multi-sensory experience and we drink with our eyes, with the color of that beer and even the sound of a can opening this late in the afternoon, get you ready. So I'm glad we're not doing this in the morning.

SB: Even just for those that haven't got a beer in front of them, as you pour it, you just smell the passion fruits. Like I can smell it from here as I was pouring it. You don't even have to take it near your nose.

MK: So were any passion fruits hurt in the making of this beer?

SB: Not in this one, no. This is actually, interesting story. There's a small miscommunication between our brewing team and our marketing team when the label was made on this one. And we've probably over emphasized the passion fruit bit. It's really like passion fruit and hop flavors that are coming through with this one.

SA: But you can smell it, it smells like passion fruit.

MK: And you can taste it. That's why I asked, because actually just for those who are joining us, that maybe aren't really immersed in the beer world, just explain the four key ingredients of beer so we know where the main flavor compounds come from and why that's so surprising that this tastes a little bit of passion fruit.

SB: Yes. Sure. And that's great. This beer is a great example of this or one aspect of it. So the main ingredients are water, malt, hops and yeast. And so the malt provides the sugars that ferment to give you alcohol and bubbles in a basic sense, the hops is used for bitterness, but also particularly in craft beers to generate some aromatics and flavors within the beer. And the yeast does the fermentation of the malt sugars [crosstalk]

MK: The miracle of fermentation.

SA: So there's a couple of questions that have just come through. One was, are all the designs done, get the exact wording of the question. Does the designer do all the can art work because they love the designs?

SB: We actually have two. So two designers that work on our products, these ones which are pretty much short runs at the moment, mostly are done by a designer in Melbourne that we've been working with for a while. Our core range of beers, which I guess kind of simpler designs, but we want them to have the right feel to them, but also drawing on local landmarks and things like that. They're actually done by a local design here in Bright. So we have a bit of a combination, but they're all, we outsource them all, we're not good enough at label design to do it ourselves and we've proven that. Matt will attest to that. I think you've seen some of our old labels, I think.

MK: Actually, while we're talking about labels, but actually before we do, Mark Hubbard asked, what hops created the passion fruit flavors in this?

SB: That is a good question. And I'd actually have to defer to our brewers for that.

MK: Because often galaxy, the Australian developed galaxy hop, often drives a lot of that hop character.

SB: It does, but I'm not sure that that's what we use is in this one. And sorry, Mark, I can't answer that question, but get in touch with Reed and I'm sure he will help you out with that.

MK: But that's actually a nice little segue that we'll come to about growing a business so you don't have to know everything yourself or you've got information on tap. So we'll come to that. But just before we do, when you look at the label, there's that little seal that looks like a stout that maybe Steve's not all that happy about, just tell us about what that means to you and to Bright Brewery?

SB: Yep. So that's the Independent Brewers Association seal or it's basically to certify that the beer that's being made by the brewery, the breweries independently owned. It's not part of a multinational corporations portfolio, that it's actually Australian owned or primarily Australian owned. I think it needs to be at least 25%, something like that, or no more than 25% foreign owned or large corporation owned. So it's basically a symbol to show that you are actually supporting Australian business, Australian independently owned business.

MK: Now, as I said, we've been building up to set the background for the business and how it's evolved and become increasingly professional over the years that you've been operating, the 15 years you've been operating. What have you found have been the greatest challenges that you've had in terms of understanding the business and planning for that growth?

SB: Yeah, sure. I guess I've always tried to have a firm grasp of what our costs are so that we can work out what we should be selling things for, or try and control our costs to make sure that, I guess one of the sustainability targets that we have is making sure the business itself is sustainable, that there's no point putting all this work into it if we're not here next year. So been right through very focused on financially making sure that at the end of the year, that we're actually making some profit or at least not going backwards. So a big part of that is being, especially when you're making a product like this, where the margins can be relatively low, it's making sure you've got a really good handle on all your costs that

are going into making it, including labor, and then knowing how much of it's overheads and how much it's fixed costs and those sorts of things.

SB: And so right from the start I've been quite focused on making sure we're tracking that and monitoring it and using it to help set our pricing and so on. And so, when we were small, that was relatively easy to do, we could do that with some fairly simple accounting software where you could just plug in some numbers and then maybe move some of it into a spreadsheet and go, bang, bang, bang, oh, there we go, there's our number.

SB: And we could do that, but as we've grown, those systems become much more clunky because you've got more and more inputs. You're trying to hand things over to other people to do. So when you are kind of manipulating stuff on the go, that's not as easy to hand over to new staff. So that's, I guess it was when we reached the point probably about five or six years ago, and thinking about building our production brewery that you were talking about Matt, now that's when I realized that we really needed to get our head around a system that would kind of take a lot of that or do a lot of that work for us.

SA: I think the other thing there that Scott said [crosstalk] When you take stuff out and to having start manipulating in spreadsheets, by the time you get to your answer, that answer's actually already old. Because by the time you've got all your data together and you've manipulated it, it's already out of date. And sometimes you're not doing it very often because it's actually quite difficult to do. So it's the whole thing about being able to actually have live data talking to you all the time.

MK: And Scott, brewing is a very complicated enterprise, from ordering ingredients, getting them in, brewing, having beer in tank, into package, into retail. And it can be very, very hard to find where costs are sitting on a balance sheet and where income's coming in. And I understand that you've found that the systems that you're using now help you give a much more accurate by the day view of how you are going, where things are sitting on your balance sheet, for example.

SB: Yeah, yeah. Pretty much. I guess with the NetSuite system that we got in place, we can see that on a daily basis. If beer goes out and into a warehouse somewhere, then that's transparent and we can see what that value is that we're moving around.

SA: Yeah. I think in the old system it didn't even have multi-location, you to actually create a new skew for if it was going to be somewhere else.

SB: Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

SA: And it was the difficulty of actually having multiple locations was almost unworkable. And when we came to actually bring the data across, we found that there were all sorts of errors that had crept into the inventory valuation and it was one of those things we just said it, well, we're just going to have to flush it through because it is what it is.

SB: And one of the tricky bits with aspects of beer is the excise. So as soon as the product leaves our premises, then we need to be paying the excise on it, unless it's going to another bottle store. So there's a lot of rules around how that's managed. So you kind of need to be able to track, not just when product ends and leaves, but what the alcohol content is of that product, what classification it has from an excise perspective, and then use those parameters to calculate what excise you need to pay. And that might be

over 20 or 30 different products each month. So it used to be each week, we used to have to do it each week and it was just, it was a nightmare. We only had six products, but it was just, it was a huge task.

SA: And look, the ATOs, we've actually had contact with the ATO when we were building the excise calculator and they are absolutely immovable on it. And the whole thing that came along with COVID where people started doing mixed cases as well, they want to know that ABV in every single can in that case, there's no averaging of ABVs trying to make it easy. And there's a very, very small tolerance. You can't just use the ABV on the label. You've actually got to use a lab ABV of what's actually in that tin. And to be able to track that through every single batch, through every single movement, has some significant complexity.

MK: As you've moved to a multi-location business, how has NetSuite, with Steve and Cloud Cultures help, helped transform the business of Bright Brewing?

SB: Well, I guess two parts to that. One is that NetSuite allows us to specify location. So when we move it, it's often just a matter of putting in a location change for that product. But secondly, being cloud based means that we can perform that from either site. So we are not having to come back to the office to just enter some data or try and log in remotely and use software that's running in a virtual screen on another computer somewhere, which never works. So believe me, we tried it and it just, it's hopeless. So being cloud based means that we can log on from anywhere pretty much and access the data or do the changes that we need to do.

SA: The other thing is when they need help from something, and they say, hey Steve, Andrew, Wendy, whatever, they give somebody a call and they say, oh, we need to find something, can you help us? We're in their system straight away. We don't have to go and log in and dig through and link up to things. We're in and we can see things straight away. And then the other fun thing is when they say, oh, who bugged that up? We can actually go through the whole system trace and we can say, well, actually it was you. No, so that happens sometimes, I did that to myself in my own business. But anyway, so able to actually trace who did everything, when they did it, what was changed, when it was changed, all that kind of thing is very, very powerful.

MK: Now I'm going to use one of those buzz words at the moment of unprecedented, because we're still in many ways in that unprecedented time and Bright, like a lot of other breweries, pivoted during that stage. If you didn't have the NetSuite with Cloud Culture working, how would the business have gone? Were your practices robust to survive that sort of just once in a lifetime challenge?

SB: It certainly helped a lot having NetSuite. I think the timing was perfect for us to have that all in place. Literally, it was four months.

SA: November 2019.

SB: Four months before COVID hit. And that meant that when people did need to work from home or independently, that it was easy to do. We didn't have to try and work out some system where some people could be in the office working on the accounting system while others weren't here or something like that. People could just go home and do their work from home. So I think that was, we were very lucky, but that certainly made that whole working from home scenario much easier to implement. And

we still have staff that work from home because there's no need for them to be in the brewery to do that work.

MK: So what's next for Bright Brewing, and how will the NetSuite system be a springboard for the plans you've got for the business?

SB: Well, I guess the great thing is that it seems to be completely scalable. I don't see any problem with us as we grow. We are looking at a number of ideas about potentially having more sales staff in Melbourne and other capital cities. So just from a sales perspective, it makes it easier for them to get involved with it or to get straight onto the system. We're actually currently looking at a CRM system that they can use as well, that we will integrate with NetSuite. One of the most recent things we've done is just installed Lightspeed, which is a paperless pass from the bar to the kitchen.

SB: So gets rid of all the paper dockets that would normally be printed out in a kitchen and fall out of the docket holder and slide under a bench somewhere and get lost. And so a customer misses out on their meal, whereas now it's all digitized now. So they're all stored on a, or they're displayed on a number of computer screens within the kitchen, depending on what's being ordered. And it's just so much more efficient, and there's a copy of those, a record of each of those orders on there. So if something does for some reason get missed, it's easy to go back and find it again.

SB: So that the irony is that Lightspeed as a company who actually runs themselves on NetSuite. So Lightspeed is a point of sale company. They're a NetSuite client as well, and they have a very powerful reporting engine that we can pull the data out and bring that into NetSuite automatically. So we've only been live on Lightspeed for a couple of weeks now, so we're waiting for the dust to settle before we get the integration going. But the plan is, is to get the integration going. Scott also mentioned the, you mentioned the CRM, NetSuite does have a CRM, but what I think we're talking more about is mobile sales.

SB: That's right.

SA: So Andrew Dove's actually on the call from DSD. It's a mobile sales platform that the guys are on a tablet, but it's live to all the data, telling them how much stock there is in each location, what the person last bought, where their orders are up to, if they owe you money, everything is live on a tablet while they're sitting in front of the customer. And that means that they don't have to pick up the phone every five minutes and say of the office, where's this person's order? Have they paid yet? Have we got stock of this? And it just empowers the salespeople so much more in the field.

SB: Yeah, and it also just gives us a lot more opportunities. If we decided that we wanted to open another venue somewhere or something like that, then that'd be super easy to do. Having that infrastructure there already, we wouldn't even need to really replicate anything, we can just slot in. So it does give us a lot of opportunity.

MK: Did you ever anticipate that these were the things that you were going to have to incorporate into the business and learn about the business? And I guess how important is it having a partner like Steve and Cloud Culture to help you through these processes so you don't have to be across everything yourself?

SB: Yeah, look, I mean, I was quite aware that we needed a solution like this quite a number of years ago, probably nearly 10 years ago, as we were really starting to try to grow the business more. And we built our restaurant and we realized that there was a whole lot of extra data there that we weren't really capturing properly from in the kitchen and just the cost of running the bar and those types of things. We had a whole lot of systems in place for determining the cost of the beer product that we were making. But when it came to running a kitchen and a bar, there was things that was kind of slipping through there. And we tried a number of different solutions and none of them really gave us that information that we needed.

SB: And meanwhile, the brewery was growing and we were struggling to keep up with managing that data from the brewing side of things as well. So I was quite aware that we needed to find another solution, but of course it's difficult to know where to start with that, and there's all these options out there that seem like they're good. And then you hear from somebody who installed something or other, and they're like, oh, don't do that, we spent years trying to get that going, and now we've ditched it and we're trying something else. And you'd see things that look all good and then you hear a story like that and you think, oh God, how can I trust that somebody will actually deliver on this and we didn't want to be going back and forth trying things and then abandoning them and then trying something else.

SB: And so I guess, and back in the early days, Steve was one of those people who was saying, hey, this is a solution, this will be great. And at first I was like, oh yeah, okay, here we go, this might be all right. But the more I communicated with Steve, the more comfortable I became, that he really seemed to have a strong grasp of what it was that we needed to do. He was asking the right questions and he had the right answers. So it became apparent after a little while that that seemed like the best, I guess, the people that understood what we needed to try and achieve the best and that's exactly what we found.

SB: The implementation process is a major disruption to the business. There is no doubt about it, but there's no other way to do it. And if you've got all these systems that you've been relying on for years, and then you're going to say, all right, now we are going to move to something else because doesn't matter what you're moving to and how good it is, it's going to be a disruption to your business. And there's this work to be done in retraining people and getting the systems right to work with your business.

SB: But the great thing about having someone like Steve involved is that he was there every step of the way with us and fixing any of these friction points that we were having, where we were having trouble changing or not sure how to do it, that's when he'd step in and say, well, this is how we see it working. And so we could then work on that and get that solution implemented.

MK: We might just check, sorry Steve, you go.

SA: [crosstalk] I just like to also say that Scott's referring to me, but there's eight other people that sit behind me and some of them are on the call and each of them do an amazing job in helping us to achieve that. So I want to give them some credit too.

MK: Now having talked about lockdown, we might move to the next beer. Again, just little samples. So we're drinking very responsibly. This is the Lockdown Haze. Tell us a little bit about this and we'll come back to the questions about NetSuite.

SB: I think we made this one right at the end of lockdown, and I think it was, especially our sales guy in Melbourne who comes up with a lot of these names. I think he was just in this like a haze, he was kind of, didn't really know what to do with himself. And I'm sure a lot of people can identify with that. We were lucky enough to have a bit of freedom up here in Bright, being regional. But we really felt for everyone in Melbourne who was locked down. So this is a, well, we're calling it a Juicy IPA. So this is one where we're really using the flavors and aroma of the hops as the prominent feature.

SB: This was made with a special hop extract, we don't normally use hop extracts because they're a little bit, well, they're not, I guess the natural form of the product, but this one's quite interesting because there's a, [inaudible] hops did a, they've found a way to extract, normally when using a hop extract you using it to provide bitterness to the beer. So what they do is they'll extract the bittering compounds of the hop flowers and that will be your extract and then you just put them in the beer to make it bitter. But this is one of the only ones I know of really where they've actually extracted the aromas from the hops and incorporated those into the extract. So what we're able to do is add those into this beer and give you a whole lot of hop flavor and aroma without any of the bitterness from that hop. So that makes it more juicy flavored, I guess, if you like, which is kind of why we've named it that.

MK: Now while we enjoy it, because again, hazy, once upon in time, Coopers was about the only hazy beer going and this certainly doesn't look like your old school beer.

SB: No. And with a lot of these sort of fruitier beers, they'll often be a little bit hazier to them as well. I'm not actually sure whether that's come from the, I'd be surprised if that's come from the extract, probably more from the other hops that we were using in there as well. There is still a little bit of bitterness in here. That's because we haven't just used the Salvo extract, got a bit of Amarillo and Centennial in there as well I think. So that's sort of leading to that haziness a bit, I think.

MK: And speaking of old school beer, and at a time when things were a little bit different in the brewing industry, one of the challenges that small breweries like yourself had getting started, was there were no know canning lines that were made to the scale that suited your business. There were no packaging lines and the whole industry has had to restructure to fit the needs of a business of your size and scale. How well has NetSuite worked with you to work with a small but growing business?

SB: Yeah. I mean, it's actually quite a commitment to move to it, but I think the stage we are at, then it's certainly been worthwhile. We were looking at having to put on extra people basically to help manage our admin just with the extra work that we're looking at. So when we sat down and worked it out, we could actually, the cost of installing the software actually is more than offset by the labor savings that we've made.

SA: We actually do a calculation when we presenting it to clients that are looking at it. And generally we land up somewhere around 30 to \$45 an hour employee. So if you could imagine an employee that was costing you 30 to \$45 an hour, but adding efficiency to every single process, all the way through from sales people placing an order, finance doing their thing, logistics, supply chain, procurement, manufacturing, and all of that talking to each other, adding efficiency to every step for the price of one or two people. If you took it as one sort of 30 to \$45 an hour on average, that's pretty bloody good value when you look at what it does for this.

SB: Mostly what it saves us is double entry. We were getting to the point where we're double or even triple entering some things just to try and track our costs and fit within the excise requirements and all those types of things. But really now [crosstalk] we've pretty much just single entry into whichever aspect of the NetSuite platform that we need to put it into and that's it. So it's just saving us a lot of just manual labor of data entry, which is frustrating.

SA: And it's interesting you talk about double entry like that, one of the challenges that they had with COVID when it started, is they had a work commerce with website and those people that weren't drinking in venues now started looking at people's websites to order, and suddenly from only having a handful of orders a week people were starting to go onto the website and want to place orders. And it became a bigger and bigger challenge of, that goes into an e-commerce site, and then somebody's got to take that order and re-enter it into NetSuite. And there's a company or Faract, which Oracle have seen the value in and they've actually bought them. And Faract is a proprietary integration technology that as the order comes in, it just appears in NetSuite, nobody touches it. There's no reentry. So whatever your customer enters in the e-commerce site, bang, it just sits there.

SA: And I think at one stage you were getting well over 100 orders a day coming through when special releases and stuff came through like that. And the guys in supply chain weren't spending all their time sitting typing things. And then the next evolution to that is organizing freight. And in fact, today on the other side of this wall, they were actually doing the test of the product called Ready Freight, which is another product which is, NetSuite has this whole suite cloud developer network. They have about 580 suite apps, which you can actually get to work with NetSuite, and they're all certified and tested.

SA: They have to join a program to get into that and Ready Freight in the next few days, when those orders hit will do all the freight booking inside, whether it's going with send or Australia post or whatever it is, and we'll print out a label for them and they all have to do slap it on. So nobody's having to go into another platform, enter a person's address, work out what the rates are and all that. So it's the efficiency that it adds the whole way and the opportunity that it adds for efficiency that's so important.

MK: It's interesting that there are so many benefits to a brewery from an application such as this. Is there one that really stands out as the greatest benefit to you in installing it?

SB: For me the biggest benefit really is the fact that it's online, like it is cloud based, and we can access it from anywhere we want. And that was kind of the first thing that we realized when we went to a second venue, being the brewery that's located off site, is that we needed something that could operate not just on a desktop somewhere, and operate properly on the cloud. So for us, that's the biggest benefit, but really it's having that, it's almost like having custom design software for your business, custom design accounting software with all these. Whenever we've needed an add-on to do something, there's a solution already there. So we're not having to get anything custom made for it, that if it's to integrate to our website, then it's there. And if it's to, even with the new point of sale that we're selected, that's the system that will work with NetSuite. And so, they work together and it just means that that's less steps that we need to manage in between the different aspects of the business.

SA: I think anybody who's gone through custom software development knows it's a very painful process. And when you can literally turn something on and it works, it's pretty incredible.

SB: Sorry, I was just going to say that we've installed four different point of sale systems now and the Lightspeed implementation, not that it's necessarily NetSuite, but it integrates NetSuite. But that was the easiest installation we've ever done, basically went in with it about a week or so, whereas most of the others have taken months of back and forth and tweaking things to get them right. So it's just nice when things work.

SA: So there's two words that sort of Scott's touched on there, is flexibility and extensibility. So the flexibility of the platform is immense. So even the other component we use, which is called Barrel ERP, they actually won the award from NetSuite in 2016 for the brewery component. Sitting in these vessels here, when you start making beer, you fill up the kettle and then you do multiple batches of the kettles through the fermentor. Just a simple thing and being able to handle that through a manufacturing process, that each batch of that when it lands up in a fermentor it then gets grouped as a batch. It does all that.

SA: Scott was talking about bittering in the beers, the IBUs, the alpha acids, all those kind of things attracts all that kind of stuff in brewery speak, but the platform is built with that flexibility built into it. And even the stuff we've done as Cloud Culture on the excise and the CDS, the container deposit scheme, being able to track that. The CDS report took us about 30 minutes. Now that enables us to track every single can into every single state in one report, once a month they push a button bang and it gives them that report.

MK: And to me, that's one of the biggest gripes that I hear from brewers, is that there aren't applications that fit the very unique business challenges that brewers have. And I imagine it's been fairly rigorously stress tested in a brewery that's been growing such as Bright has.

SB: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It actually took us a little while to sort out the excise component in the start, but that's-

SA: We're still improving it.

SB: Yeah. Yeah.

MK: It's always a government bias, so is a government by the way.

SB: We'll get it completely sorted and then they'll change it.

SA: The other thing is the extensibility side of things. The one thing that maybe we didn't mention along the way was the payroll system and when COVID hits and all the JobKeeper stuff came in, the people from [crosstalk] cloud who all part of the Suite cloud developer network, they're a New Zealand based business. In the 20 something years that NetSuite's been around, they've actually won the international award twice for being the best application that's been built for NetSuite. It actually sits inside NetSuite. It's not sitting outside over in its own platform. It's actually written in the code. It's in your platform. You don't even know that it's separate. And when JobKeeper came along, these guys worked night and day, they had the developers working round the clock, when JobKeeper hit bang and they didn't charge anybody an extra cent for it.

SA: And they put that into play. And it's just that kind of dedication from each of the Suite Cloud developer partners that keeps pumping stuff in. The people from Barrel ERP have actually just rewritten the whole platform in the latest version of what's called SuiteScript 2, and we've only just started playing with it and having a look at it. And the first version of Barrel ERP was great but the second version, Scott hasn't seen it yet, is pretty bloody amazing. They've done some really, really clever stuff to do it better again. And there's 580 solutions, odd solutions you can add on. So when somebody says to us, I've got more complex supply chain planning challenges, there's about a dozen supply chain planning tools that we can actually, that are more powerful than the one that's already built into NetSuite, if you need that extra grunt. So what Scott was talking about, about growth and what happens when you grow, is sometimes businesses will have their own quirky requirements and you just, it doesn't run out of puff. It just keeps growing with your business.

MK: Now I'm just very conscious of the time and we are fairly soon scheduled to finish, so we may not actually get to the Affogato stout, but that's probably a good one to save for after dinner tonight for anyone that's got one in front of them. So maybe you can just tell us a little bit about the Affogato stout and then I'll come back with one last question before we finish.

SB: Yeah, sure. So this particular one is actually a double version of the one that we would normally make. I think we've been doing it for two or three years now, which is just regular single shot.

MK: We call this double shot?

SB: Double shot. Yeah, double shot. Imperial Affogato stout. So this one's actually made in collaboration with the local coffee roaster and it's got basically coffee and just a nice coffee flavor to it. This one's quite strong. So there's a number of standard drinks in this can, it will say here somewhere.

MK: Three standard drinks.

SB: Three standard drinks.

MK: Probably best left for this evening.

SB: Yeah. It's a good one to share. Yes, and we'll also just-

SA: If you're wrapping up, I don't think we can actually leave this one out. This was sort of like a little surprise that I asked Scott to add at the end.

MK: This is one of Steve's?

SB: So another collaboration that we did, we started this a couple years ago, is actually using our Russian Imperial stout to make a whiskey with one of the local whiskey distillers. So we made a couple thousand liters of our Russian Imperial stout and distilled that down into a few hundred liters. And just this year we've released our first whiskey.

SA: And look, I love beer and I love whiskey. And I got a bottle of this when it came out. I think that was the day that we broke the e-commerce site because they released it and everybody wanting stuff. And my bottle arrived and I was absolutely blown away. I've actually since been to Blackwood and gone a

tasted of their other whiskeys, they are a very, like really, really good job that they do there. But I have to say, I think this is the best one. It's absolutely amazing. [crosstalk] Another little thing as well is at the end, I'm going to be sending everybody a little offer from Bright if anybody is interested in purchasing any product from them. And I would highly recommend this if you've got someone you want to spoil with a Christmas present, because it is actually bloody fantastic, really amazing.

MK: I'll be letting my daughter know because I certainly want to [crosstalk] I heard about it. But just to take us out and thank you everyone for joining us today and thank you, Scott and Steve, for talking us through the implementation of NetSuite and also the partnership with Cloud Culture. But one of the things that as a beer writer just excites me, is that a brewery like Bright is growing. We're seeing you expand. How is NetSuite helping you grow and helping you to continue to grow?

SB: I guess the main thing is, we no longer having to worry about software limiting our growth. So we can pretty much do whatever we need to, whether it's more locations or just more people. Scalability is not really limited with this product. So, more sales staff, all of that type of thing. So it really, and this is one of the main reasons that we wanted to move to this platform, is that we want to grow. We want the brewery to be a major player in the craft beer scene in Australia. So it sets us up perfectly to achieve that.

MK: Steve, before we do sign off, if anyone wants to find out how Cloud Culture can partner with them to get NetSuite into their business, I take it everyone's got your details or do you want to give us an address that we can go looking for?

SA: The email that I sent the invite from is my personal email. I'm one of the founders of the business, I'm absolutely passionate about the product. I actually ran it in my own business for five years, that's how I fell in love with it. And it's strange I use the word love, but a lot of our clients use that word as well. So if you want to hear a bit more about the journey that we've gone on, not just with Bright Brewery, but a lot of other small, medium ASX listed companies, some of them in the brewery and alcohol space, some of them in other food industry ones, but generally around wholesale distribution and manufacturing, drop me a line and we'll get in touch.

MK: Scott, before we let you go, where can we find out more about Bright Brewery? Where can we order your beers and apparently whisky now as well?

SB: Yeah, that's right. Well, once again, our website is brightbrewer.com.au. So there's links to our shop and all those types of things there, and come and visit us in Bright sometime, we've got a great deck and restaurant just by the Ovens River in Bright, and you'll have a great time.

MK: And look, I can't echo that enough and it really is one of the most magic locations in Australia and the beer is pretty good too.

SB: Thanks, Matt.

SA: Thank you.

MK: Thank you all for joining us, and Steve, thank you very much for hosting us for this conversation about NetSuite and Cloud Culture.

SA: Thank you very much.

MK: Thank you.

SA: Cheers. Thanks everyone.

MK: Thanks for coming.

SA: Cheers.

SB: Thanks everyone.