

Like many businesses impacted by COVID, Brook & Bull winery spent much of the time in lockdown focusing on ways to strengthen their business and identifying ways to stabilize their customer base. "We're small, in the middle of nowhere, so outreach is really important to us," according to Ashley Trout, winemaker and self-described "artist and farmer."

As tasting rooms shut down across the country, many wine sales moved online. Due to the requirements of the highly regulated wine industry, however, the checkout process is often clunky and confusing.

"The number one thing that we have to overcome is ease of purchase," Trout said. It's easy for customers to forget which email address was used originally to sign up, or otherwise get lost in the checkout flow. Instead of relying on clunky checkout processes, Brook & Bull has created what they call "the easiest wine buying you've ever experienced."

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On the backend, they allow customers to enroll in a special texting "Avochato Club" by providing their phone number and credit card on file. For the customer, the mechanics of the wine purchase become seamless. When they want to buy a 3-pack of Cabernet Franc, for example, they simply text in their order, which will be processed by the staff of Brook & Bull.

As they started completing orders over text, Trout learned that the interactions with their customers quickly escalated beyond the transactional details. "These are people who want to connect with a brand, and we're giving them a new way to do that – a texting way," Trout said.

Text subscribers have a

10X higher conversion

than email subscribers:

Text subscribers represent **9%** of Brook & Bull's total base, but they account for **50%** of all purchases.



The two-way conversation has become a major part of their communications, but yields "a big ROI" according to Trout. When Brook & Bull sends out an email blast at the same time as a text message broadcast, they generally find that fifty percent of the purchases come from texting despite having only one-tenth the number of texting subscribers as email subscribers.

"We really want to grow that texting list," Trout said. "Once we've got people texting, they're much better buyers."



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