Unbxd

Case Study

How FoodServiceDirect.com ramped-up B2B and B2C sales via AI-powered commerce search?

Netcore UNBXD

Foodservicedirect started its journey in 1992, and soon realized the need to automate the purchasing process, long before the internet was an option. 26 years later FSD was reborn through investments from major partners like Unilever, Dot Foods Inc. FSD is a US-based foodservice online distributor offering B2B and B2C buyers an ever-expanding digital storefront for bulk purchases. With over 250,000 SKUs, FSD's online catalog is stocked with a variety of classic crowd-pleasers and comfort foods, alongside environmentally friendly disposable products and supplies.

FOOD SERVICE DIRECT.com

Founded: **1992**

Headquarters: **US**

Industry: **Grocery (B2B, B2C)**

SKU: **250,000**

250%
Increase in search conversions

30%
Increase in revenue via Site Search

14%
Increase in Average Order value

PRODUCT DISCOVERY IS THE NEW PRODUCT PLACEMENT

FSD continues to sell in bulk to a variety of retailers, hotels, food trucks, hospitals etc. However after a relaunch in 2018, it set the ambitious goal of ramping up sales by 10x within 3 years. As a part of a FMGC group, leveraging the online channel for their customers buying in bulk made for an obvious choice.

"This was not an easy choice for us though since buying behavior is unique across B2B and B2C markets. However, one thing that remained common was our desire to create personalized, simple, and relevant purchase experiences for both kinds of customers", says Adeel Murtaza, Head of eCommerce Technology.

Digital team can't afford to choose the wrong partner for Product Discovery, because searching online has to be as easy as asking someone to point you towards the right aisle in the physical store. One thing hasn't changed and never will, regardless of the purchasing channel: If they can't find it, they can't buy it.

Adeel mentioned "Think of a large departmental store like Walmart, Target or Costco, where a first-time shopper enters and gets overwhelmed to figure where a specific product is located. He looks around and starts walking across the store and finally gets to his product after spending one hour looking around. Alternatively, he could ask a store assistant who will directly share where the product is located. This is what smart search brings for the online eCommerce store."

This can only be achieved when the technology can understand what the shopper 'meant', rather than what they entered in the search box. This is why FSD chose Unbxd after performing a comprehensive competitive analysis. Unbxd had the right AI-based relevance and Product Discovery algorithms with a console that was easy for their merchandising team to use. They have not looked back since.

"We were looking for a solution that was easy to integrate with while hosting our eCommerce on Magento(Adobe Commerce). The search solution had to be fast and agile. The AI capabilities Unbxd demonstrated and offered, we knew we had found our solution."

Adeel Murtaza, Head of Ecommerce Technology
FoodServiceDirect.com

AI-BASED SEARCH RELEVANCE

The Unbxd AI interprets what the shopper wants by understanding what they meant, not what they typed into the search box. Having already enriched the product catalog with concepts like categories, events, seasonality and more, it then selects the right product and displays them according to what that specific shopper is more likely to want to buy.

For example, a shopper looking for 'light snacks for after school', will be shown string cheese and Goldfish, carrots and celery whereas the shopper looking for 'superbowl food' will be shown chips, pretzels, pepperoni sticks and mini pizza-bagels. In both cases, the search terms were not found in the product description. Instead, Unbxd leveraged their 50+ algorithms to understand the concept of 'light + snack + after + school' as well as 'Superbowl + food'. They read the mind of the shopper, presented them with what they were actually looking for and curated the results page based on the items each shopper was more likely to buy.

Often shoppers have an affinity for particular brand, however if it is out of stock, the Unbxd platform will inform the customer while also suggesting an alternative brand so they don't leave empty handed.

In cases where refrigerated products are ordered, Unbxd can consider shopper geolocation, product shipping times and weather conditions to ensure only products that can survive the journey are surfaced to shoppers.

Unbxd takes 'findability' even further, with advanced capabilities such as AI powered autosuggest, so the shopper can be shown the product they are looking for before they finish typing, while also suggesting complementary products (peanut butter also displays jelly and bread). These types of expected capabilities make shopping experience easier & faster while also increasing their cart value.
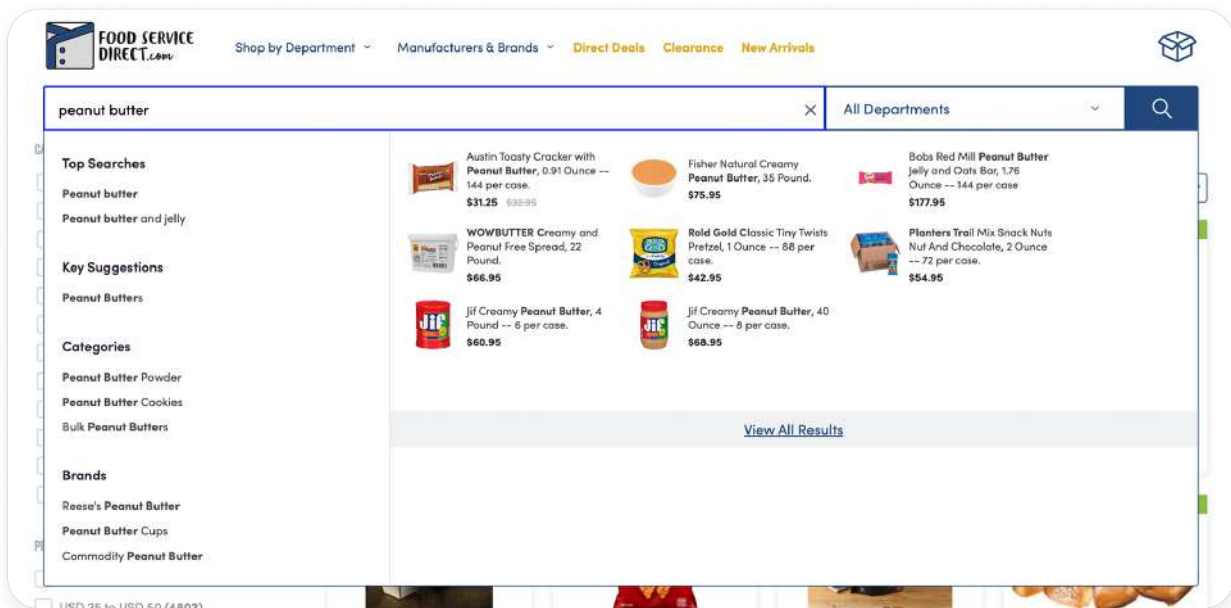
To continue simplifying the experience for your shopper, suggestions will change as more characters are entered and depending on what they search for, you can guide the AI as to what you want to present. Unbxd also broke industry protocol and cracked open the **'AI black box'** so that merchandising teams can adjust the logic according to their changing business requirements.
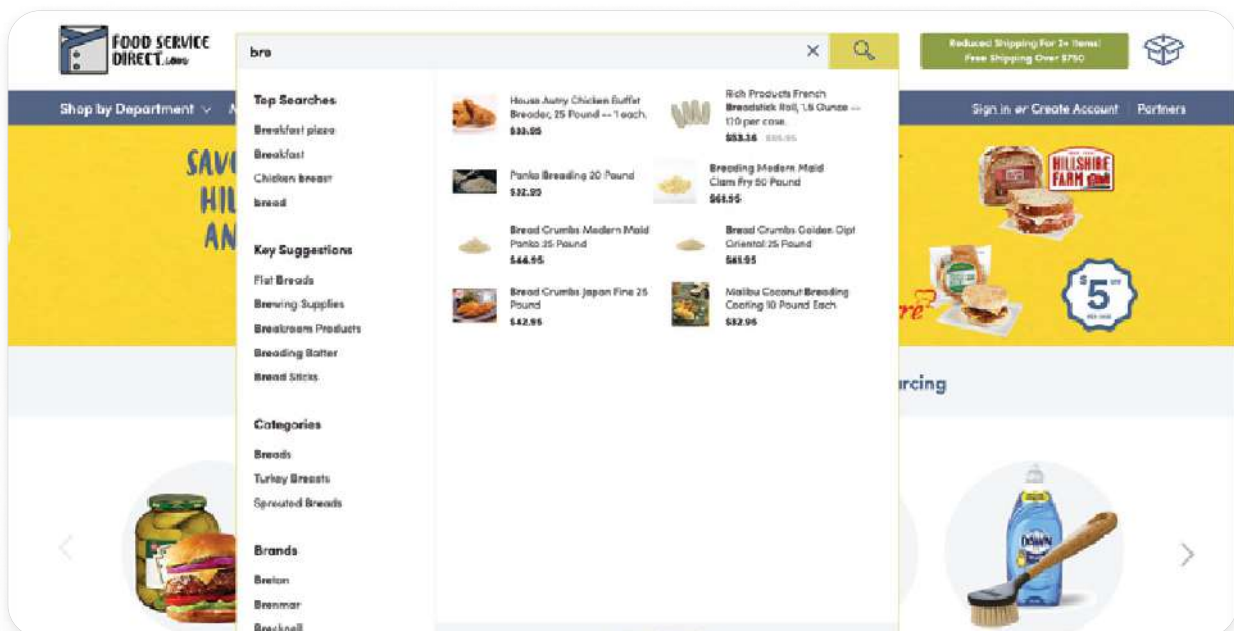
This AI-based relevance technology of Unbxd has led to a 250% increase in search conversions, contributing to a 30% increase in revenue coming from search alone. Not only search, but Unbxd has also added value to the shoppers' purchase journey by recommending relevant products and suggestions on the go.

Unbxd AI-Powered search solution engages with the shopper using relevant facets and filters, visual autosuggest thereby shortening the path-to-purchase and resulting in an increase in Average Order Value for FSD by 14%.

OVERALL BUSINESS IMPACT FOR FSD

All of this combined helped FSD exceed their original targets and led to a 250% increase in conversions, and a 30% increase in revenue and that was just for those who used their search box!

For those who 'browsed' around their website, Unbxd helped FSD increase their Average Order. Alice by 14%.

**SEARCH JUST EVOLVED AGAIN, IS YOUR PLATFORM UP TO DATE?**

Times are changing and so has product discovery. Query understanding, catalog enrichment and personalized product placement is the here and now. Replicate the store experience, help your customers find what they came to buy. Expose them to products they didn't know you had based on the explicit and implicit signals they dropped throughout their shopping experience - they've told you what they like and want. So give it to them!

If you build it, they will….GroceryShop!

FSD did and they saw a **40% increase in sales, 30% increase in search related sales and a 14% increase in AOV**. That was the impact of their decision to put their trust in Unbxd!

"The Unbxd team has a great set of product offerings, especially for AI-driven Search and Recommendation Engine. One thing that stands out while our implementation was the openness from their team to accommodate our unique business case. I would strongly recommend any Ecom shop to consider Unbxd line of products for quick Custom off the shelf solution (COTS)"

Adeel Murtaza, Head of Ecommerce Technology FoodServiceDirect.com
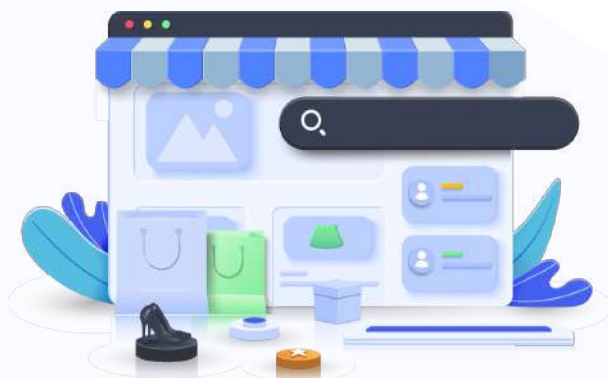
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