Case Study: **A.F. Blakemore**
Product discovery provides perfect balance

Like many B2B retailers with complex catalogs, A.F. Blakemore struggled to leverage its product data to create a good product discovery experience. The company previously had a developer-created search function, managed by individual divisions, which resulted in disparate search experiences. Given the nature of A.F. Blakemore and the fact that the business trades within multiple divisions, it was vital that product discovery was no longer skewed in favour of divisions with more developer resources as this approach was inhibiting growth.

A.F. Blakemore lacked product discovery

A.F. Blakemore is the largest division of SPAR UK, owning 275 stores and supplying over 700 independent SPAR stores in total across England and Wales. The company is also a member of the Unitas Wholesale group and a significant supplier to the independent grocery sector across the UK.

As a complex B2B retailer, A.F. Blakemore was left juggling multiple storefronts and customer groups, on top of an intricate and diverse product range. Seeking to maximise efficiency and simplify processes, A.F. Blakemore searched for an automated on-site search tool that could translate its complex catalogs into a great product discovery experience on its websites.

"We were facing a really poor search experience, created manually. It was a "one size fits all" solution, which given that we are a B2B group, selling to multiple divisions, wasn't ideal. Autocomplete, autosuggest, and product boosting were all dominated by the largest division. Products from our smaller divisions were suppressed as a result." explains Stuart Sykes, Head Of Digital at A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd.

The best product discovery experiences will make data-driven use of product upsells and personalised recommendations – but before A.F. Blakemore could aspire to this level of finesse, it needed to have the basic foundations in place.

SPAR 🌲

Platform: Custom

Region: United Kingdom

Industry: B2B, Food and Beverage

Products: Smart Search,
Smart Category Merchandising

> *"Klevu offered so much of what we were looking for and suited our affordability. It was the best of both worlds."*
>
> - Stuart Sykes,
> Head Of Digital at A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd.

What problems have Klevu solved?

"We have already seen a massive improvement in what we could do vs what we couldn't do before" explains Stuart Sykes, Head Of Digital at A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd. Initially A.F. Blakemore integrated Klevu solely within its wholesale division, but after seeing such positive results the retailer has since rolled out the software within its SPAR and Foodservice divisions also. A.F. Blakemore integrated Klevu's powerful Smart Search and Smart Category Merchandising features which enabled utilising different feeds and showcasing products based on customer intent, rather than just the most popular products. Interestingly, working with Klevu also acted as a driver for job creation within the business as apprentices were hired to help with the mass updating of product descriptions and data. Additionally, the success of Klevu's integration also highlighted the need for online merchandisers, as well as a category manager in the near future.

After extensive research it was important for us to find a partner that we could get the most benefit from.

- Stuart Sykes,
  Head Of Digital at A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd.

Going forward A.F. Blakemore has exciting plans to monetise key Klevu features such as product boosting, landing pages and banner management as part of their supplier process. These plans could be a potentially major one for the business as it's likely to act in a similar way to paid ads, which could then provide a lucrative revenue opportunity for the business.
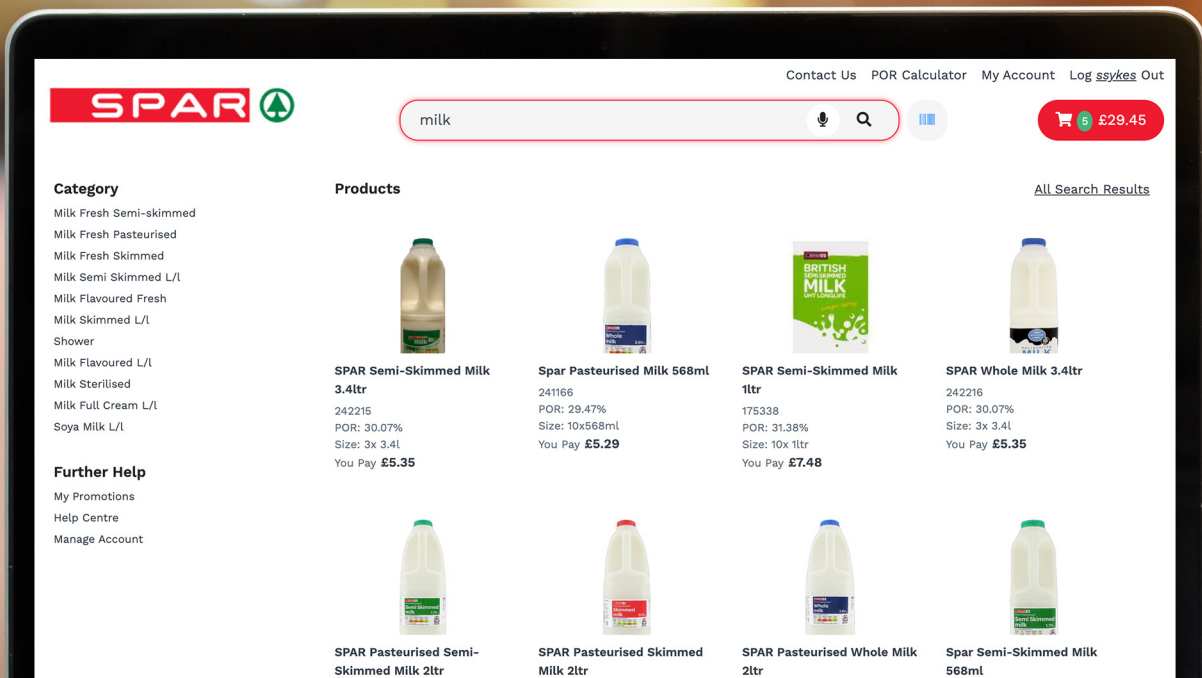
For more information about the Klevu Discovery Suite, please **schedule a demo.**