



Craft Brewery Pivots to E-Commerce Amid Pandemic

A DIGITAL INK CLIENT STORY





The Client

Silver Branch Brewing Company is a unique local taproom offering beer lovers a welcoming, internationally influenced experience. The Silver Spring, MD-based gathering spot is built around the German notion of *gemütlichkeit*, or the cozy camaraderie of sharing a delicious drink with friends. Silver Branch, which serves thoughtfully crafted flagship and seasonal beers, celebrated its first anniversary in March 2020. The brewery sells beer at its DC Metro-adjacent location, in addition to wholesale and online.

Project Highlights

- Phased website rollout builds anticipation for Silver Branch taproom and beer offerings, and powers a successful fundraising launch.
- Innovative website development showcases Silver Branch's dynamic events and flavors, growing its customer base through blog-based storytelling and added functionality and pushing the taproom to record-breaking sales.
- Agile pivot to quickly establish a fully customized e-commerce platform amid a pandemic enables Silver Branch to weather catastrophic restaurant and bar closures.

The Challenge

Prior to launching in March 2019, Silver Branch approached **Digital Ink** about building a customized, visually striking web presence that would introduce the new brewery to the public and evolve with the business. The initial website needed to generate excitement about Silver Branch and anticipation of its beers before the taproom ever opened its doors to customers. Once Silver Branch was up and running, the website had to serve as a go-to resource for beer fans to keep abreast of new products and events.

After a year of successful growth and record-breaking sales, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Silver Branch, along with restaurants and bars worldwide, was forced to shut down. With no in-person sales, the brewery's primary revenue source disappeared virtually overnight. Future plans to build an e-commerce platform suddenly became urgent as Silver Branch needed to create new pickup, delivery, and online sales channels amid the restrictions of the pandemic in order for the business to survive.



Silver Branch needed to create new pickup, delivery, and online sales channels amid the pandemic restrictions in order to survive.

The Solution

Digital Ink worked closely with Silver Branch’s founders to integrate the brewery’s carefully conceived branding into planning and executing a phased web rollout. Phase 1 generated an informational landing page to establish Silver Branch among local beer aficionados. The page included an email signup to compile a list of supporters and update them on opening progress, and a donation prompt inviting customers to join an exclusive Founders’ Club.

“We dream it and build it. Digital Ink has been really hands-on in terms of helping build a lot of the functionality and the base design.”

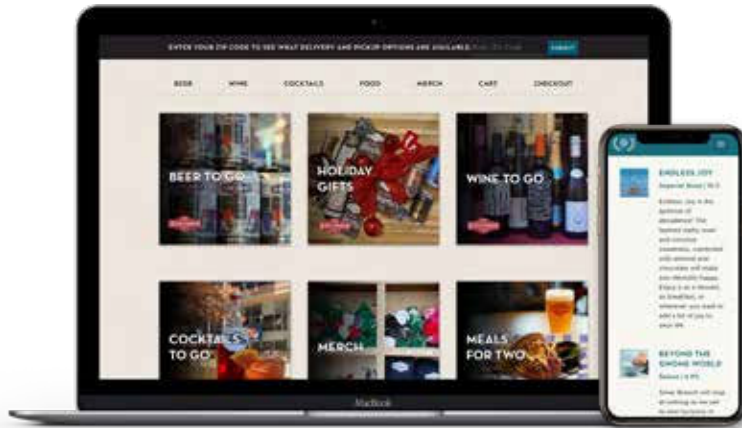
BRETT ROBISON

CO-FOUNDER, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, DIRECTOR OF SALES, SILVER BRANCH BREWING COMPANY



Silver Branch Brewing Company Marketing Support

- Website Design
- Website Management
- Customized Website Functionality
- E-Commerce and Delivery Platform Development



“Working with Digital Ink has been great.”

BRETT ROBISON

CO-FOUNDER, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, DIRECTOR OF SALES, SILVER BRANCH BREWING COMPANY

Once the taproom was up and running, Digital Ink expanded the basic website to reflect the look, feel, and buzz of enjoying a pint at Silver Branch using high-impact photography, detailed design, and information-packed blogs and event pages. Enhanced functionality spotlighted available seasonal beers and captured requests for private events. A dynamic listing of events supplemented Silver Branch’s social media channels to keep the taproom packed.

When COVID-19 shuttered the brewery, Silver Branch turned to Digital Ink to make long-term e-commerce goals a reality. Digital Ink added new layers of innovation to the site, enabling customers to order beer, wine, and food for pickup and delivery, without the need for third-party vendor support from popular restaurant delivery apps. The Digital Ink team continues to tweak the Silver Branch online experience based on customer behavior and client feedback, optimizing the beer lovers’ experience in-person and online.



The Results



The taproom's initial "digital billboard" website enabled them to gather some 1,500 email addresses of friends and fans before a single beer was poured. That subscriber list has since grown to 4,500. The landing page was also instrumental in powering the Founders' Club fundraising effort, which helped Silver Branch collect \$75,000 from loyal members to kickstart its launch.

Once Silver Branch's business was booming, the website connected the growing taproom community through news of new flavors and a blog that told the Silver Branch story. With the rapid growth of its e-commerce business, traffic to the Silver Branch website has more than doubled.

Thanks to a robust and easy-to-use sales portal, online beer sales, pickup, and delivery became a primary revenue driver for the business.



Perhaps most crucially, Digital Ink was able to move nimbly to help Silver Branch stand up an entirely new e-commerce platform, converting once-nonexistent website sales to a peak of \$25,000/week. Thanks to a robust and easy-to-use sales portal, online beer sales, pickup, and delivery became a primary revenue driver for the business. Those heights have since plateaued at roughly \$10,000/week, which represents 10% to 25% of Silver Branch's revenue in any given week. This fully customized, proprietary online store enables Silver Branch to maximize profitability.

"The success of online sales kind of blew our minds. We realized, 'Oh wow, that is really powerful.'"

BRETT ROBISON

CO-FOUNDER, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, DIRECTOR OF SALES, SILVER BRANCH BREWING COMPANY

+ 10%

INCREASED REVENUE

+ 25k

ONLINE SALES

Learn More

Digital Ink is a graphic and web design and development firm dedicated to helping businesses and brands look their best online and in print. Creative, flexible, and responsive, Digital Ink is ready to collaborate.

To learn more about customized design or development support, contact Digital Ink today:

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