



**W**hen building a business, one of the most important character traits is an entrepreneurial spirit. Chris and Kate Dunn, owners of Delta Pacific Beverage in Stockton, each have that spirit brewed with a strong dedication to growth. As a result, what was once a passion, has grown into their San Joaquin Valley-based business recently celebrating its 10th year. Today Delta Pacific Beverage is one of the larger exclusively craft beer distributors in California, and Chris serves as a member of the CFBD board of directors. Business partners and married for 16 years, the Dunns know craft beer and the people and passion that go into each brand.

# Meet Chris and Kate Dunn

## Founders and Owners of Delta Pacific Beverage



Just over ten years ago, Chris Dunn was working in banking in the Central Valley while Kate was running her labor compliance consulting firm and expecting their third child. Chris had always had a strong passion for the craft beer business and with his knowledge of beers and business, he took the leap and launched Delta Pacific Beverage. Delta Pacific started as an importer and within the first few years of operation quickly shifted to distribution, partnering with local brands like Knee Deep and Hoppy Brewing. Eventually creating relationship with the top San Diego breweries like Pizza Port, Belching Beaver and Modern Times. Their longest relationship is with San Diego's Pizza Port who they describe as awesome friends. When Chris started the business, he would load up his F150 full with beer and drive from Lodi to Visalia to sell product. He would do this six days a week. Eventually, they brought in sales representatives, delivery drivers and shortly thereafter Kate joined the full time.

Today Chris oversees the sales side and Kate the operations side of the business. Recognizing the value of partnership, they each comment that it's important they "stay in their lanes." Their business is self-funded and they invest every profit earned back into it. They now distribute more than 50 brands across the San Joaquin Valley, the South and East Bays with expansion into Monterey and Santa Cruz. Delta Pacific is 50 employees strong and they have 11 refrigerated trucks and five refrigerated cargo vans on the road.



When asked about their success, Kate and Chris each say it's come from investing not only in the business, but also their people. Their team are knowledgeable about craft beer and customer service and that has helped them really grow their brands. Chris shared that they handpicked their sales people and have invested in each of their growth. He notes that creating a relationship with their customers is something that you can't put a price tag on. They give back to their employees who work hard and that has helped them attract the best in the business. Chris and Kate met and hired their general sales manager when he was a bar manager in the East Bay. Working with him, they helped him recognize his potential and he has grown into their top performer.

That thread of investment is weaved into everything the Dunns do. They shared how they have grown with breweries like Modern Times, Revision, Karl Strauss, to name a few. Chris shared how hard some of the breweries were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic when they had to close their tasting rooms. True to their spirit of collaboration, Kate got on the phone with the owners of Faction Brewing in Alameda to see how they could help. Faction quickly shifted all production into package helping them keep the sales going into channels that were still open. Supporting each other was the key to weathering COVID and now they are both stronger for it.

This last year, Delta Pacific hit their projections even with 40 percent of their accounts not buying beer. True to their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to growth, the Dunns are focused on scaling employee training as their company grows, while they also balance spending time with their now 16-, 12- and nine-year-old children. If 2022 proves to be anything like 2021 for Delta Pacific, it will be another year of discovering new brands and tremendous growth for their employees and business.

