



Proud Source

Water done different.
A partnership done right.

What is a Blazing Tale?



Simply put, the clients we partner with are remarkable. And they're constantly forging new ground in their industries. As their partner, we're in awe. Blazing Tales is our way of sharing their amazing, trailblazing stories with you.

Proud Source

Bottled water is everywhere—which means single-use plastic water bottles are everywhere, too. In fact, humans use 1.2 million plastic water bottles every moment, resulting in 321 billion pounds of plastic packaging created annually. As if that weren't reason enough to re-think what you're drinking, not all bottled water is actually spring water. An estimated 25% is just bottled tap water.

Proud Source is different. In addition to sourcing pristine, naturally alkaline spring water right here in the US, the company is carving out a new niche with its “infinitely recyclable” aluminum bottles. And, they're bringing sustainable business to a small town where opportunity was drying up.

Proud Source teamed up with Ernest Packaging to make the most of their existing resources, enable growth, and have a partner they could count on to bring efficiency and innovation to their unique packaging needs. Ernest is proud to support this future-forward business on their mission to do good, as they blaze an exciting new trail in the bottled water industry.



A source of delicious tasting water—and hope.



“We couldn’t find it in our souls to bottle this amazing spring water in a material like plastic. We knew we had to make responsible packaging choices for future generations.”

CJ Pennington, Co-founder and President,
Proud Source Water

Proud Source Water was founded in Mackay, Idaho, in the Northern Rockies. Once a thriving mining town, Mackay (population: 514) was facing a job shortage, with economic troubles so dire they were looking at having to shut down the local school. But the one thing Mackay did have was delicious mountain spring water.

Filtered by thousands of layers of ancient volcanic rock, the spring water is naturally alkaline and mineral rich, without any need for additives. Proud Source’s founders, who have local roots, realized that the town was actually sitting on its own solution. In 2016, they set out to build a best-in-class bottling facility at the base of the spring source, making an immediate impact on the local community. Next, they looked to their packaging as another way to do good.

“

Locals like to say,
“Once you’ve
tasted the water
in Mackay, you’ll
never leave.”

CJ Pennington,
Co-founder and President, Proud Source Water



They decided to bottle their water in aluminum, which can not only be recycled again and again without ever losing material strength, it's also recycled in every state—a opportunity to benefit communities everywhere. Plus, aluminum keeps water colder for much longer than plastic.

Proud Source launched their product in 2017 and hit the ground running. Sprouts Market soon signed on as their first national

retail customer, with Whole Foods following the next year. The sustainability aspect really took hold in the market. By 2021, the company had grown so much they broke ground on a second bottling facility in Marianna, Florida, sourcing natural alkaline spring water in the Apalachicola Forest.

“At Proud Source, we’re leading the way in offering more sustainable options.”

Dan Benjamin, eCommerce Manager, Proud Source Water



A partner Proud Source can count on.

The partnership between Ernest and Proud Source was a natural fit right from the start. Both companies are committed to supporting and strengthening the local community here in beautiful (and booming) Boise. Plus, Ernest's warehouse is located just a few miles away from Proud Source's headquarters, perfectly positioning our team to respond in a pinch.

Good communication is critical to any successful partnership—and when the lines of communication are open, you never know what opportunities might arise. For example, when Proud Source's Supply Chain and Logistics Manager, Paige Breidinger, got a call from the Mackey plant one day letting her know the stretch wrap machine was down, she immediately put in a call to her Ernest client relationship manager, Trevor Wise.

Within two minutes, Trevor called back to say he could get someone out to the plant. Despite the three-and-a-half-hour drive from Boise, our customer automation specialist Greg Herr, got to Mackey quickly, identified the problem—the machine needed a temperature change—and fixed it.

“We love knowing Ernest is local and that they’re in our corner. Instead of being on an island, they’re with us whenever there’s an issue. Knowing they’ll actually be there to solve the problem always eases the situation.”

Paige Breidinger, Supply Chain Logistics Manager, Proud Source Water



“ In an industry where margins are thin, every minute of downtime impacts profitability. Knowing you’ve got a partner in the area who’s willing to go the extra mile is valuable in more ways than one.”

Another time, the plant called to say they’d run out of stretch wrap due to an error with their system, which showed it was still in stock. Paige messaged Trevor and he was able to have more product delivered in a short timeframe.

Following this incident, Trevor offered to store extra stretch wrap for Proud Source as part of Ernest’s just-in-time inventory solution. “That way,” Trevor says, “it’s always on hand so they don’t have to worry about running out.”

Most packaging companies operate at either national or local scale. But Ernest does both. Stephen Turgeon, general manager of Ernest’s Boise division, explains, “Our local presence lets us service a small town like Mackay, even if it means driving over icy roads to get there. At the same time, we can service any Proud Source location thanks to our divisions and vendor partnerships across the country and our vast array of solutions.”

Dan Benjamin, eCommerce Manager, Proud Source Water



Partnering locally for far-reaching growth.



“Sustainability is a core focus for Proud Source and what Ernest is doing for us is definitely more sustainable. We’re decreasing the amount of carbon we’re producing by taking advantage of an empty truck.”

Dan Benjamin, eCommerce Manager, Proud Source Water

While Proud Source is expanding their footprint in both production and sales, they’re still dedicated to supporting the local community that started it all. The company was looking for ways to lower operational costs and increase overall efficiency in service of their mission.

To get their uniquely packaged product to stores around the country, Proud Source uses shrink wrap to bundle cases of water onto pallets before shipment. They were in the market for a new shrink wrap supplier and were also dealing with occasional issues with the stretch wrapper, which wasn’t running the film efficiently.

As innovators in their own right, Ernest is always looking to partner with companies that are charting exciting new paths—and loved the direction Proud Source was heading. Paige says when Trevor reached out, “It was perfect timing.”

The Proud Source team liked Trevor’s proactive approach. In addition to offering shrink wrap materials, Ernest’s automation guru Greg re-tuned the wrapping machine and performed multiple test-runs with various new films to find the most efficient option in advance of taking an order. This showed that Ernest was truly invested in Proud Source’s success.

Ernest began supplying stretch and shrink wrap for both of Proud Source’s bottling facilities. As a result of the new materials provided and the equipment tuning, Proud Source gets more use out of each roll of shrink wrap, reducing overall usage—and environmental impact.

Trevor says, “Through the combined power of Ernest’s solution-based selling and our local/national presence, we were able to provide a new level of optimization for Proud Source that’s really changed their packaging game. And that’s what we’re all about.”

When Ernest began delivering supplies to the Mackey facility, it came to light that Proud Source was paying a freight company to deliver pallets of water to their warehouse in Boise—over 200 miles away. Knowing the company’s commitment to environmental stewardship, Trevor offered to back-fill Ernest’s own delivery trucks with Proud Source product and have the drivers bring it back to Boise after dropping off packaging materials. This saves them freight costs while helping to further reduce their carbon footprint.

The future is looking bright. And green.

Proud Source is just getting started on their mission to protect the environment, empower consumers, and uplift communities. In addition to continuing to replace more and more plastic bottles with sustainable aluminum, the company is also looking to bring renewable water to the world. They were recently acquired by Source Global, a major player in the water technology field that's developed game-changing new drinkable water technology.

Source Global makes hydro panels, which are similar to solar panels but pull in air from the atmosphere around them and then separate the molecules to distill water—literally out of thin air. Minerals are then added in to make the water drinkable.

Solar capabilities allow the panels to operate completely off grid. So, they can be placed essentially anywhere in the world. Source has been able to go into

places where there's no drinkable water, such as some remote Aboriginal communities in Australia, and put up a small grid of panels to give that community immediate, ongoing access to drinkable water.

Proud Source will be working to bring this renewable and sustainable water into the marketplace. "We're essentially creating a brand-new water category," Dan says, "and that's very exciting."

As Proud Source continues to extend their core values of sustainability and doing good to all facets of their operation, Ernest is proud to play a small part in bringing about positive change for consumers, communities, and the world. And whatever the future holds for Proud Source, the Ernest team will be right here—ready to help solve it, together.





Proud Source is about more than just a high-quality product, it's about educating people that not all water is created equal, and that business can be used as a force for good. We're excited to have Ernest in our corner as we continue to make an impact on the world around us."

CJ Pennington,
Co-founder and President, Proud Source Water

Always listen to your Mother Nature.



We offer a variety of custom services to lower your carbon footprint, by cutting down waste and upping sustainability.

