

PRESS ARTICLE

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Sidel's breakthrough accumulation solution Gebo AQFlex significantly improves Orangina Suntory France's performance and agility



Installed for the very first time in its largest size at Orangina Suntory France's plant in Meyzieu, Sidel's conveying and accumulation solution Gebo AQFlex® increases the uptime of their PET packaging line for soft drinks by offering a high level of flexibility to address a much diversified production range of nine bottle formats with different shapes. Moreover, by covering a wide range of outputs, Gebo AQFlex has immensely contributed in preserving Orangina Suntory France's product quality with smooth and contactless product handling.

Suntory group were founded in 1899 in Osaka. Today, with 300 subsidiary companies and more than 38,000 employees they are cited as one of the oldest and largest companies in beverage distribution in Japan.

The French company Orangina Suntory France were acquired by the group in 2009. As the leader regards fruit drinks in the French market with 20.2% of market share value (2019) and four production sites in France – La Courneuve, Meyzieu, Donnery and Châteauneuf-de-Gadagne –, Orangina Suntory France are one of the top players in the beverage segment with an 908 million euro turnover (2019) and a consumer base of 17 million households in France¹. They dominate the beverage market with more than 350 product references, among them six major flagship brands Orangina, Schweppes, Oasis, Pulco, Champomy and Maytea.

¹ Source: Orangina Suntory website

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New generation accumulation system with a high level of flexibility and complete product care

In 2017, Orangina Suntory France bought a brand-new packaging line for their Meyzieu site, mixing equipment from different Original Equipment Manufacturers, including the Sidel Aseptic Combi Predis™.

As nine bottle formats from 0.2 L to 1 L are being manufactured on the line for four brands – Oasis, Pulco, Maytea and O'vberger – Orangina Suntory France were looking for a new accumulation solution that could take care of various formats and shapes, including square bottles to which traditional mass accumulation solutions are not suited. "Our experience proved that the use of such an accumulation principle in which products are in contact with each other might damage the thin wall PET bottles we are using for our non-carbonated products, and thus alter the overall production quality," explains Hubert Couppey, Project Manager in Operations Development Department at Orangina Suntory France. "Besides, flexibility was especially a sensitive issue since square bottles sometimes cause blockages when being handled with traditional mass accumulations. Such blockages may result in line stoppages and impair our overall productivity," adds Hubert Couppey.

The new accumulation solution also had to be able to cover a wide range of outputs from 27,000 to 45,000 bottles per hour and provide extensive buffer capacity from 3 to 5 minutes of net accumulation to secure the overall line efficiency.

Taking into account the great number of products to handle, Sidel proposed the largest model of the Gebo AQFlex range at that time. To address the versatility of the line, Gebo AQFlex was a perfect choice, offering new level of flexibility due to the single-lane, contactless and smooth handling of the products. Moreover, this flexibility will provide the customer with great freedom in creating attractive packaging designs with different shapes in the future. Additionally, another key buying factor was its compactness, offering greater accumulation/space ratio compared to traditional systems and enabling an easy integration into a limited space area, which was the case at the Orangina Suntory France site.

Gebo AQFlex convinces Orangina Suntory France in especially organised test

As the accumulation solution was quite new on the market and was based on a breakthrough design, Orangina Suntory France called for evidence. Accordingly, delegations with experts from France and Japan were invited to a three-day factory acceptance test at Sidel. After the first day, which also turned out to be the closing one, everyone was highly convinced that the capacity of Gebo AQFlex was absolutely meeting the demanding requirements of the packaging line in Orangina Suntory France's site in Meyzieu.

Swanny Goussanou, Project Manager at Sidel, reflects upon the successful experience: "The

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all-in-one, compact design perfectly handled all nine formats fully respecting fragile and lightweight containers due to its smooth, contact-free single-lane product handling.” During the test, international experts also experienced the user-friendliness of the equipment in real life: “Gebo AQFlex is quite easy to use as it offers simple and automatic changeovers with just a few clicks on the Human Machine Interface (HMI) and minor mechanical interventions on the infeed and outfeed conveyors,” summarizes Hubert Couppey. As a result, such ergonomics help Orangina Suntory France save operator time.

Easy and efficient installation with the help of a ‘twin’ solution

Considering that this large model size was installed for the first time, it implied a high-level quality of collaboration between Sidel and Orangina Suntory France teams. To handle the unit’s modifications and start-up, a twin solution was set up at Sidel’s site. For fast troubleshooting a remote access was opened taking control of the Gebo AQFlex installed in Meyzieu site.

Gebo AQFlex at Orangina Suntory France was successfully installed in September 2018. As of today, the solution is running at a high-efficiency level of 99,5%. The proven performance of Gebo AQFlex and the overall success of the project led to an order and installation of another Gebo AQFlex at Orangina Suntory France’s site in Donnery, and further orders of two units in Nagano, Japan.



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Sidel is a leading provider of equipment and services solutions for packaging beverage, food, home and personal care products in PET, can, glass and other materials.

With over 40,000 machines installed in more than 190 countries, we have nearly 170 years of proven experience, with a strong focus on the factory of tomorrow with advanced systems, line engineering and innovation. Our 5,500+ employees worldwide are passionate about providing solutions that fulfil customer needs and boost the **performance** of their lines, products and businesses.

Delivering this level of performance requires that we stay flexible. We continuously ensure we **understand** our customers' changing challenges and commit to meeting their unique performance and sustainability goals. We do this through dialogue and by understanding the needs of their markets, production and value chains. In turn, we apply our solid technical knowledge and smart data analytics to ensure lifetime productivity reaches its full potential.

We call it **Performance through Understanding**.

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