

PRESS ARTICLE

22/09/2020

Sidel celebrates 40 years of blowing and packaging expertise for PET containers



It was 40 years ago when Sidel launched its first commercial blower to produce PET bottles for the beverage industry. The company has been supplying and pioneering innovative PET packaging solutions for beverage as well as the Food, Home and Personal Care (FHPC) markets to meet the growing and fast-changing consumer demands since then. Through its extensive PET packaging and engineering expertise, combined with unique package design and blowing process capabilities, Sidel has been strongly supporting the market in the use of PET and will continue to do so as PET is the optimal sustainable material for packaging.

In 1980, Sidel introduced the world's first commercial production solution to package beverages in PET – the SBO blower (*In French – Soufflage Bi-Orienté – meaning Bi-oriented blowing*) for carbonated soft drinks (CSD). The company has driven many performance improvements in PET bottling technology that cover all beverage and FHPC categories, achieving huge advances in the productivity of complete lines ever since.

Guillaume Rolland, Vice President for PET and Sensitive Products Portfolio at Sidel, explains the key values that underpin the development of EvoBLOW™, the latest generation blowmoulder by Sidel: "Throughout all the advances in equipment and packaging innovations, our underlying objectives are answering industry requirements in terms of best in class product integrity and superior package quality as well as providing maximum efficiency, lower total cost of ownership and

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sustainable competitiveness. Another key target is to ensure optimised production flexibility allowing easy handling of multiple SKUs and focusing on energy savings and the reduction of raw materials' consumption to minimise the environmental impact."

To make the most of the EvoBLOW, its integrated equipment intelligence and very responsive management lead to continuous production optimisation and easier maintenance services. It combines reactive automation with innovative technologies of connected machines and real-time data analytics. Unparalleled bottle quality can be reached with the patented blowing process control and self-regulation solution: IntelliBLOWER™. It automatically detects and eliminates bottle process deviations to ensure production consistency and quality. Simplified and intuitive operator interventions, smart notifications for better reactivity, and reduced maintenance time contribute to improve productivity as well.

Expanding packaging innovation and performance boundaries

PET packaging industry has been developing ever more rapidly since 1980, although the importance of innovative and durable bottle design has remained. Sidel has been instrumental in some of the most significant, attractive PET bottle designs in liquid and FHPC packaging by always focusing on innovative packaging design and recognising market trends to create original, eye-catching shapes that support producers to differentiate their products in a highly competitive and fast-paced market.

Sidel's commitment to packaging design also includes driving initiatives in rightweighting, which have, for example, seen weight reduction for 0.5 L format PET bottle for still water by over 70% between 1985 and 2019. For instance, Sidel's X-LITE™ bottle, introduced in 2019, has achieved a weight of just 7 grams for a 0.5 L format PET water bottle while still maintaining an excellent top load performance. This is possible due to the very wide blowing process capabilities of Sidel EvoBLOW.

Four decades of PET blowing innovations

In 2020, a Sidel EvoBLOW line produced 90,000 bottles per hour (bph) on the world's fastest production line for water; almost 25 times faster than the SBO blower from 1980, which was running at 3,600 bph. Since the introduction of the first PET bottle, Sidel has been the key driver behind numerous innovations in the packaging industry. With more than 7,000 SBO blowers running worldwide, blowing technologies by Sidel have become the standard. Affirmation for this statement may be found in the company's long-lasting partnerships with key packaging players and the many repeated orders, which demonstrate the confidence in Sidel's blowing expertise.

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40-YEAR EXPERTISE IN PET PACKAGING AND BLOWING



From process perspective to machine configurations, Sidel offers the highest level of blowing configurability to ensure the most tailored solutions as regards specific market needs. Available as a stand-alone or integrated machine, it can be combined with other functionalities like filling and capping in Combi Blow Fill for all types of processes (regular, aseptic and ultra-clean with Predis™ dry preform sterilisation, heat resistant blowing and hot filling, preferential heating for flat containers). It can also be combined with labelling and filling, as in the Super Combi, an all-in-one, smart solution for production of water and carbonated soft drinks. Also, it can be associated with the Actis™ plasma-coating and filling solution to extend beverages' shelf life and enable package lightweighting while the Combi Blow Deco ensures fast, safe manufacturing and decoration of empty containers.

Uncompromised packaging quality across PET, ref-PET and r-PET

Sidel's blowing technology has always met the changing needs of consumers as well as environmental challenges. In addition to work on reducing energy and consumption of raw materials to a minimum, Sidel has always been working to keep the blowing process as optimised as possible to deliver the best bottle quality and

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performance for all types of PET resins – virgin and recycled PET (r-PET), one-way and refillable PET (ref-PET), transparent and opaque, monolayer and multilayer.

Due to legislation that helps reducing consumption of plastic raw materials and, thus, the carbon footprint, the ref-PET and the r-PET bottles have been becoming more and more popular sustainable plastic packaging alternatives in the recent years. In the production of ref-PET bottles, Sidel has been the right partner to deliver refill blowing processes for more than 30 years. The specific heat-resistance blowing process ensures optimal packaging specifications to sustain the structure of the ref-PET bottle across many uses and withstanding the durability tests (washing cycles). The unique Sidel electrical mould heating allows a very accurate blowing process, ensuring highly consistent ref-PET bottle quality. This can also be combined with Sidel capabilities in bottle designs, in-house washing evaluations for refillable bottles, ref-PET sorting line engineering and very sustainable bottle washer solutions (Swing™ range).

Sidel has also been supporting all the industry players who introduced r-PET bottles to the market more than 20 years ago. It is true that PET is the only plastic packaging material that is 100% recyclable and suitable for direct food contact with a closed loop bottle-to-bottle recycling, ensuring a very low environmental footprint compared to alternative non-plastic materials. By requiring fewer raw materials and reducing waste, r-PET achieves a carbon footprint, which is nearly five times lower than when using virgin PET. Sidel's overall goal is to offer technologies with wider blowing processing windows to ensure consistent r-PET bottle quality while avoiding any impact of the resin quality variation due to collection methods and bottle origin. Furthermore, Sidel's r-PET assessment platform is already contributing to this purpose boosting the development and qualification of bottles with increasing r-PET content while committing to industrial performance. To do so, Sidel keeps a fundamental close collaboration with the r-PET value chain stakeholders and offers an incomparable expertise to accompany the entire industry into the significant change of conversion to r-PET.

Through a holistic approach to PET packaging production, supply chains can be turned into value chains. This demonstrates how keeping continuous R&D efforts, focused on extending the frontiers of blowmoulding, continues to make an invaluable contribution to future sustainable beverage packaging solutions. Sidel will keep on playing a fundamental role in this process by constantly innovating in order to ensure that packaging in r-PET will further evolve for everyone's benefit: the consumers', the industry's and our planet's.

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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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