

## PRESS ARTICLE

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### Sidel supports Suntory Japan to achieve improved product quality using breakthrough contactless accumulation solution- Gebo AQFlex®



**Suntory Japan, a worldwide leader in beverage production and manufacturer of soft drinks and spirits, has adopted Gebo AQFlex®, Sidel’s conveying and accumulation solution, to ensure the highest level of product quality and optimise its line operations for its brand-new bottling facility.**

With its smooth and contactless single-file handling of containers, Gebo AQFlex® was able to guarantee the full product integrity required by Suntory Japan while improving the overall line performance.

#### **Achieving high product quality standards**

A key priority for Suntory Japan was reaching the highest levels of quality for its customers.

“Our philosophy is “Mizu To Ikiru”, that is, “Living with Water”. By this, we endeavour to “satisfy people like water”. Our highest priority was to ensure the best quality for our customers,” said Toshiya Kobayashi, Chief Operating Officer, Global Technical Department.

Suntory Japan’s newest bottling facility, Shinano-no-mori Plant, is the production home for Tennensui mineral water, produced in one of the lightest PET bottles in Japan. The light weight of the bottle increases quality risks during production, such as dents being caused by contact between the bottles, or bottles falling.

Suntory Japan required a product handling solution that would ensure full product care by protecting the bottle’s exterior and preventing the possibility of bottles falling. The beverage manufacturer turned to Sidel and made the decision to adopt Gebo AQFlex®. Designed for all types of containers, Sidel’s all-in-one product conveying and accumulation solution ensures the highest level of product quality, due to its gentle, 100% contactless and single-lane handling of containers, thus fully meeting Suntory Japan’s expectations.

#### **Advanced performance**

##### **Contact:**

TALA

Beth Milton, Account Manager

Tel: +44 (0) 7940 270338

Email: [beth.milton@teamtala.com](mailto:beth.milton@teamtala.com)

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With both companies sharing an ethos of innovation, Suntory Japan approached Sidel to implement the Gebo AQFlex® in its new plant after hearing about its success at Suntory France and witnessing the accumulation solution in action.

“After several visits to the Suntory France site where the Gebo AQFlex® was already successfully installed and running, we were reassured that the solution would be able to reach the high performance and output levels we required,” continues Toshiya Kobayashi.

Offering a compact, all-in-one design and operating fully automatically at an efficiency of more than 99.5% whatever the speed, Sidels’ Gebo AQFlex® solution enabled Suntory Japan to improve its line layout and guarantee the brand’s high level of productivity while ensuring the safety of its employees.

“Gebo AQFlex® has improved our production line in many ways, from the space-saving aspect, the simplicity of layouts to the wide range of automation solutions, and it has contributed to improving the line’s operating rate and quality.”

### **Complete customer support**

The installation of the Gebo AQFlex® commenced during Covid-19, limiting the ability of Gebo AQFlex® experts to physically visit the plant. However, they fully supported Sidel local technicians and Suntory teams by carrying out a remote Factory Acceptance Test using AR glasses, and by providing 24/7 assistance during installation and commissioning. Once able, they visited the plant to fine-tune the machines and optimise efficiency. As the only plant producing Tennensui mineral water, the site must run 24/7 therefore Sidel’s remote support proved even more important by ensuring the production line was never stopped.

“Our project with Suntory Japan demonstrated Sidel’s focus on prioritising its customers needs, which was shown through the performance of the equipment and full dedication in project support and follow-ups,” said Nicolas Bossert, Gebo AQFlex® Product and Business Development Manager.

### **Flexibility for the future**

While Suntory Japan currently only manufactures two types of bottles at its new plant, the small, 550-mL plastic bottle and the large, 2-L plastic bottle, Sidel’s Gebo AQFlex® offers enhanced flexibility which can easily increase and introduce new bottle formats if needed in the future.

“The solution can accommodate any product, whatever the application, in all container materials, formats and shapes. It is sold all around the world and can be used in many different market categories highlighting its impressive flexibility.” continues Nicolas Bossert.

*Find out more about Gebo AQFlex® on the [Sidel website](#).*

**Ends.**

### **Contact:**

TALA

Beth Milton, Account Manager

Tel: +44 (0) 7940 270338

Email: [beth.milton@teamtala.com](mailto:beth.milton@teamtala.com)

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### Editor's Notes:

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[Suntory overview video](#)

[Suntory solution video](#)

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Beth Milton, Account Manager  
Tel: +44 (0) 7940 270338  
Email: [beth.milton@teamtala.com](mailto:beth.milton@teamtala.com)

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

Based on over 170 years of proven experience, we help shape the factory of tomorrow, through advanced systems and services, line engineering, eco-solutions, and other innovations. With over 40,000 machines installed in more than 190 countries, Sidel has 5,000+ employees worldwide who are passionate about providing equipment and service solutions that fulfil customer needs.

We continuously ensure we understand the evolving business and market challenges our customers face and commit to meeting their unique performance and sustainability goals. As a partner, we apply our solid technical knowledge, packaging expertise and smart data analytics to assure lifetime productivity at its full potential.

We call it **Performance through Understanding**.

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