

TYPE
CASE
STUDY

INDUSTRY
FOOD AND
BEVERAGE

LOCATION
CLACKAMAS,
OREGON

PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY DOUBLES PRODUCTION VOLUME WITH PLEX MES

Premier beverage manufacturer simplifies technology landscape and inventory accuracy with Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform



CHALLENGE

- Manual inventory maintenance
- Lack of operational efficiency and responsiveness
- No single source of truth



SOLUTION

- Plex Manufacturing Execution System (MES)
- Plex Quality Management System (QMS)
- Plex MES Automation & Orchestration (MES A&O)



RESULTS

- Achieved 99% inventory accuracy
- Achieved 100% shipping accuracy
- Increased productivity by 10%
- Reduced inventory levels by 25%
- Reduced waste by 20%
- Doubled production volumes in size, producing 2M case equivalents per month
- Decreased maintenance response times



COMPANY OVERVIEW

Portland Bottling Company is a leading packer and co-packer of ready-to-drink beverages on the west coast, offering end-to-end solutions and serving both major and independent brands.

Portland Bottling Company (PBC), founded in 1924 by Andrew D. Hrestu, is based in Clackamas, OR and specializes in ready-to-drink beverages, manufactured exclusively in aluminum cans. The com-

pany offers full-service solutions from batching and filling to warehousing and logistics for various partner brands.

PBC has used the Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform™ since 2020, following an implementation supported by Plex Partner Revolution Group. Revolution Group helped ensure all departments acted on the same set of information, creating cross-departmental efficiency and increased responsiveness.



MANUAL INVENTORY PROCESSES LIMIT VISIBILITY AND TRACEABILITY

Prior to the implementation of Plex, PBC lacked a streamlined system and operated across 9 disparate technologies. With no single source of truth, data was cumbersome to collect and often contained errors due to manual input. As a result, production visibility was limited, there was little traceability, and both quality and inventory accuracy suffered. It was difficult for PBC to respond quickly to market changes or adjust production in real-time. These separate systems were also failing to scale alongside the growing business.

“We’re a beverage co-packing operation. We produce and warehouse products on behalf of our customers. Tracking our customers’ inventory accurately is paramount to our business. Plex enables us to do this efficiently and easily report to on hand balances and warehouse charges,”

ROBERT VAN BLAKE
IT Director, Portland Bottling Company.



A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH UNIFIES INVENTORY, QUALITY, AND OPERATIONS

PBC knew they needed to simplify their technology landscape and gain real-time production insight. Various spreadsheets and out-dated technology created a disconnect between quality and inventory control. The company would benefit from an elastic, digital infrastructure that could expand as needed.

With the help of Revolution Group, Portland Bottling Company implemented the Plex MES, inclusive of Plex MES A&O and Plex QMS, in 2020, moving to one connected system and opening the door for production accuracy.



REAL-TIME VISIBILITY DRIVE MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS

The implementation of Plex allowed all departments to act on the same set of information, creating cross-departmental efficiency and responsiveness. Production volumes more than doubled in size, allowing Portland Bottling Company to produce two million case equivalents per month, compared to the previous 900K per month. Additionally, the company saw increased operational efficiency, productivity, and responsiveness.

“Real-time data is a key factor in operational productivity improvements. A&O data is collected reliably from the shop floor using A&O then combined with Plex inventory and quality transactions, resulting in critical decision-making information.

Prior to Plex this data was cumbersome to collect and subject to human error. Monitoring the following KPIs have resulted in a 10% increase in productivity and a 20% reduction in waste,” shared Van Blake.

Portland Bottling Company now has accurate supply inventory, resulting in quicker maintenance response times, less expediting charges, and a reduction in downtime. Shipping accuracy has increased to 100% and inventory quality accuracy, warehouse put away accuracy, receiving accuracy, and batching accuracy have all increased to 99%. The access to real-time KPIs has given the company immediate insight into what’s working and what’s not. Clearly defined data is now visible across the company, creating increased alignment and contributing to accuracy and visibility to inventory usage.



“We’re a beverage co-packing operation. We produce and warehouse products on behalf of our customers. Tracking our customers’ inventory accurately is paramount to our business. Plex enables us to do this efficiently and easily report on hand balances and warehouse charges,” reflects Van Blake.

In recognition of the company’s exciting Plex implementation, PBC received the **2025 Plex Transformer Impact Award**. The Plex Impact Awards are an annual award given to only three customers in the Plex Community who uphold the highest standards of manufacturing excellence.

ABOUT PLEX

Plex, by Rockwell Automation, is a leader in cloud-delivered smart manufacturing solutions, empowering the world’s manufacturers to make awesome products. Our platform gives manufacturers the ability to connect, automate, track, and analyze every aspect of their business to drive transformation. The Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform™ includes solutions for manufacturing execution (MES), ERP, quality, supply

chain planning and management, asset performance management, production monitoring, process automation and analytics to connect people, systems, machines and supply chains, enabling them to lead with precision, efficiency and agility. To learn more, visit www.plex.com