

The supply chain goes full circle: Alizent implements outbound scanning

INDUSTRY :
BEER

KEGFLOW USHERS IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ASSET-TRACKING WITH
FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT EXTENSION FROM A MAJOR UK BREWER.



OVERVIEW

The client, a major player in the UK brewing industry who recently extended its contract with Alizent for five more years, enhanced their Kegflow solution with some additional functionalities to help them further understand the behaviour of their container fleet which is worth millions of pounds.



Up to this point, Kegflow only allowed detailed information on empty kegs returning through the supply chain. The customer wanted to have another part of the journey covered with Kegflow. According to Mark Dolton, the client's Container Manager in Western Europe, "tracking assets as a large UK brewer is challenging on many levels but the diversity (of the markets and sales area) across the industry really amplifies this. We service lease & tenanted, wholesale and Pubco owned outlets whilst also dispatching kegs to various European countries – this variety requires a tracking system that can be utilized across all these markets and sales areas without disrupting our service level."

"Having been a customer of Alizent utilising our Kegflow system for several years, we were able to offer a new level of data that we have not been able to offer before with some new software development and installation of our RFID bulk portals to enable tracking of full kegs on outbound deliveries by customer," explains Tom Hare, UK Business Unit Director for Alizent.

The Alizent solution

Alizent implemented “outbound scanning”, designed to provide more data and insight into full keg deliveries direct to customers and wholesaler channels. The solution was adapted from one created originally for an Alizent client in Australia – an example of cross-pollination that has served Alizent well in its consulting business. “We implemented a broader range of data collection points by installing new hardware throughout the client’s supply chain to get a fuller picture of what was happening to their kegs,” Tom says.



“Not all kegs behave the same way and through different channels & routes to market, looking at data on an aggregated level can sometimes be misleading. We can now break that down further to understand what is happening on a more local level which enables our client to make more informed decisions.”





Alizent's solution offered the client additional insights into their keg cycle and provided concrete data to support assumptions that in the past had been anecdotal, primarily regarding customer behavior.

"Outbound scanning allows them to understand something that was not possible with the existing Kegflow system", says Tom. "With this recent development we have the potential to provide a kind of benchmark for the behavior of their customers. Scientific data gives them information on the cost of servicing their clients."

In addition, the client's willingness to adopt and trust the data has yielded far-reaching possibilities. According to Mark Dolton, "The data collected through Kegflow is reviewed, analyzed, and ultimately deployed with a high level of impact within our business on a weekly and monthly basis. It has led to genuine cost savings and provides a cornerstone in our overall reverse supply chain performance. This is confirmed by our recent commitment to work for a further 5 years with Alizent. Having worked with

Kegflow for several years, we've now built an historical database by both container size and brand type that allows us to inform future planning and investment strategies to best support our business and our customers. Alizent's guidance, industry understanding and professionalism has been of great support to me and other colleagues who have utilized the Kegflow tracking system. You will need to be prepared to re-think how you thought assets out in trade behave but if you're willing to adopt and trust the data, the possibilities are far and wide reaching."

Next Steps



Alizent has created within its internal operating model a dedicated product team focusing on returnable assets, with a dedicated Product Manager for Kegflow. This means more than just providing tracking solutions.

“Thanks to the development of the Kegflow system, we can help clients visualize their entire supply chains and create a more product-oriented, strategic approach to solving clients’ problems,” Tom notes. “And we adapt products and services according to what we’ve learned from working closely with our clients. Kegflow itself has evolved – it’s different, with more functionality, than 12 months ago.”

On the customer’s side, “the Kegflow tracking system is now at the heart of our strategic projects in coming years”, says Mark Dolton. “We plan to implement a broader range of data collection points and utilize the system and data captured to drive efficiency in our end to end supply chain.”



“I think the next major progression in the brewing industry will be the development of a robust and workable end-to-end solution that provides reliable and workable data across the entire industry. The diversity [within the industry] creates a real challenge for this to be successfully implemented but there would be huge potential in this,” explains Mark Dolton.

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