

How PakTech is Helping Abita Brewing Company Grow Its Canned Business

CASE STUDY



Abita's background

Abita Brewing Company, located in Covington, Louisiana—about 30 miles from New Orleans—was founded in 1986 as a regional craft brewer.

Abita makes several year-round products including ales and lagers, with popular brands such as Abita Amber, Purple Haze®, Big Easy IPA, Turbodog®, Andygator®, Strawgator, and more. Abita produces seasonal products and limited-edition offerings, as well as sodas and a spiked sparkling water line. In addition, Abita uses its beer-making expertise and manufacturing capacity to contract brew for other breweries.



OUR BREWS [VIEW ALL »](#)

YEAR-ROUND »

Amber
 Purple Haze®
 Big Easy IPA
 The Boot - Louisiana Exclusive
 Turbodog®
 Andygator®
 Wrought Iron IPA
 Strawgator
 Abita Party Pack
 Old Fashioned Pale Ale
 30° 90°
 Hop-On
 Strawberry Lager
 Light
 Hop 99

SEASONAL »

Christmas Ale
 Mardi Gras Bock
 Pecan Ale
 Spring IPA
 Legit Hard Lemonade

LIMITED »

Macchiato Espresso Milk Stout
 Office Party
 Lounging Iguanas

BOURBON STREET »

Old Fashioned Pale Ale

SPRING LOADED »

Splash Berry
 Watermelon

SODAS »

Abita Root Beer
 Vanilla Cream Soda
 King Cake Soda

In Abita's first year of operations the brewery produced 1,500 barrels of beer. Abita now brews more than 150,000 barrels of beer and almost 10,000 barrels of root beer in its state-of-the-art brewing facility.

The company's growth and success are attributed to responding to market needs, listening to customers—both consumers and contract brew customers—and making great products.

An important part of Abita's philosophy is its commitment to the environment and "green brewing." Abita views protecting and improving the environment as a responsibility the company takes seriously. This includes conserving energy and water, reusing byproducts and waste, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, driving greener vehicles, and using recycled materials.

As explained by company president David Blossman, "The commitment to the environment is part of our DNA. It's what we do. It's who we are. We don't focus on the environment to pound our chest; that's not why we do it. We do it because it's the right thing to do."

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David Blossman, President,
 Abita Brewing Company

Adding a new packaging option within Abita's existing footprint

In the past few years Abita has seen a growth opportunity in the canned business, including opportunities with both its own brands and with contract brew customers. Specifically, the opportunity involved producing four-packs and six-packs.

But pursuing this opportunity required adding new packaging machinery for handle applicators and handles. Abita knew that paperboard was a possibility, but as David Blossman said, "We had a very limited space and the reality is we could not have fit a paperboard wrap machine there."

So, Abita explored other options. In addition to space limitations, other key considerations were:

- **Speed to market with new products.** In the beverage industry, getting new products to market quickly is extremely important. With paperboard, it can take time to get artwork created and packaging materials printed. There is also a risk of being stuck with excess packaging materials. Abita wanted a solution that allowed the company to quickly and inexpensively bring new products to market for contract brew customers.
- **Line speed.** With growing demand for four-packs and six-packs, Abita wanted a solution that could fill 400 cans per minute, including oversized cans, while fitting in Abita's desired footprint.
- **Environmental factors.** For Abita, as David Blossman noted, "Environmental factors are always something we consider. It's always part of the equation." Abita looks carefully at every supplier's environmental commitment.
- **Costs.** While costs were far from the only factor for Abita, the costs for machinery and handles had to be reasonable and competitive to fit within Abita's cost structure.

Abita also took into account a company's reputation, as well as its level of service and responsiveness.

Abita's Spiked Sparkling Water, with PakTech black handles



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Choosing PakTech

Having concluded that paperboard didn't meet their needs, the team at Abita heard requests from some contract brew customers to use PakTech. These breweries already used PakTech for their in-house operations and wanted like packaging from Abita for contract products.

After looking into PakTech, Abita concluded that PakTech's solutions addressed all of its key needs.

- **Can format.** PakTech's 440 is a perfect solution for four-packs and six-packs of canned products.
- **Space efficiency.** PakTech's 440 is space efficient and fits within Abita's limited footprint.
- **Line speed.** Capable of processing up to 440 plus cans per minute with a 15% surge rate when needed.

PakTech 440



- **Speed to market with new products.** With PakTech, there is no artwork, which helps with lead times in bringing new products to market. Abita picks one color (black) and uses it for all products.
- **Environmental commitment.** PakTech's environmental commitment is second to none and fits perfectly with Abita's environmental philosophy. That's because PakTech's products are all made from 100% recycled materials and are 100% recyclable.
- **Costs.** PakTech's solutions and products are reasonably priced and fit within Abita's budget.

Also, Abita learned that PakTech made robust machinery and had an excellent reputation, and companies that had worked with PakTech had positive experiences and good things to say about the company.

Implementing PakTech

Abita's experience implementing PakTech has gone smoothly. PakTech provided a technician to help onsite with installation and had resources available throughout the implementation process to answer any questions. While ramping up new equipment always takes time, there were no hiccups or delays.

Abita is currently running at 400 cans per minute, which is in line with the company's expectations. Costs have also been in line.

Overall, Abita is extremely satisfied with PakTech. David Blossman reflected that PakTech's solution is about the same cost as paperboard wrap, but is overall a far better solution, based on its space efficiency, use of the same color for all products, environmental commitment, and customer orientation. Blossman says PakTech "makes a good product and is a good company to work with."

Looking to the future, Blossman sees canned products and PakTech's solutions as essential parts of Abita's continued growth and continued delivery of what customers want.

"We're doing more cans than ever and part of that solution is PakTech."

David Blossman, President,
Abita Brewing Company

PAKTECH, a family owned company started in 1991, is the innovative leader of 100% recycled and 100% recyclable injection mold packaging handles and automated application equipment.

PakTech is a full-service company, providing handles and application equipment to food and beverage and consumer goods industries. PakTech helps make it easy for consumers to grab, carry, and release multiple products using a simple, low waste, 100% recyclable handle.

