BUILT TO KEEP UP

Warehouse Automation for the Future of Beverage Fulfilment



Honeywell Intelligrated

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a Supply Chain leader, you know that every decision you make shapes the pace, resilience, and profitability of your beverage operations. You're facing mounting complexity: SKU proliferation, unpredictable demand swings, and persistent labor challenges. The most successful organizations aren't simply adding headcount; they're embedding intelligence and automation into every step of fulfillment to drive measurable results. This briefing is designed for you. It distills the latest automation trends, reveals the consumer forces reshaping beverage logistics, and demonstrates how data-driven solutions deliver operational excellence, cost savings, and strategic agility.



WHAT WE'RE SEEING

1

Automation Trends in Beverage Warehousing

Automation is no longer a tactical fix, but a strategic lever for resilience and growth. Yet many supply chain leaders remain skeptical about ROI, integration complexity, and workforce impact. Beverage manufacturers and distributors can overcome these barriers with intelligent, modular automation platforms designed for flexibility, scalability, and measurable performance.



Honeywell Intelligrated's Alvey Palletizer can integrate seamlessly with your systems.

PALLETIZING AUTOMATION

Automated palletizers are now essential for handling mixed-SKU beverage orders. As product variety increases, manual stacking becomes inefficient and error-prone. Automation helps provide consistent, safe, and high-speed pallet building across various formats. Honeywell Intelligrated's Alvey palletizers support complex stacking patterns and integrate with upstream and downstream systems.



Distribution centers are evolving to handle cold chain products.

MULTI-ZONE FULFILLMENT CENTERS

Distribution centers are evolving to handle ambient, chilled, and frozen products in one facility. This integration reduces transfer time and improves cold chain integrity. We can help DCs design and implement modular systems that maintain temperature zones while enabling unified flow control across the facility.



Honeywell Intelligrated's Momentum WES provides real-time visibility.

WES-DRIVEN FLOW CONTROL

Warehouse Execution Systems (WES) are becoming central to beverage operations. These platforms provide real-time visibility and control, enabling DC managers to adapt to operational changes quickly, rerouting product flows, balancing labor allocation, and managing bottlenecks. In environments where just a few hours of downtime can result in thousands of cases undelivered, this level of orchestration is not a luxury. It's operational survival.

Honeywell Intelligrated's Momentum WES provides visibility and orchestration for high-throughput, multi-format flows, helping managers adapt quickly to demand shifts.

RETROFIT AUTOMATION

When the average industrial warehouse buildout takes between 12 and 24 months from start to finish,[1] many beverage manufacturers and distributors are choosing to upgrade without rebuilding. Modular conveyor systems can allow phased automation, reducing disruption and capital expenditure. Companies can benefit from engaging with a partner that can provide retrofit solutions designed for brownfield environments, enabling fast deployment and scalability.

COLD CHAIN AUTOMATION

As consumers seek healthier, more personalized, and more sustainable options, beverage brands are expanding their portfolios. High-growth categories like RTD beverages, kombucha, and fresh juices require precise temperature control. Automation can help reduce manual touches and dwell time, preserving product integrity. Cold chain-ready hardware that is built for reliability in chilled environments is compulsory in these circumstances.



1. Arrant Contruction, The Timeline of Warehouse Construction, 2023 [Accessed Oct 10, 2025]

WHAT'S DRIVING THESE TRENDS

2

Consumer and Channel Dynamics

The beverage industry is undergoing rapid transformation. SKU proliferation in beverages is accelerating, with manufacturers introducing new flavors, formats, and packaging configurations to meet evolving consumer preferences. This complexity is driving up fulfillment costs and straining legacy systems.[2]



SKU PROLIFERATION

Functional, health-driven, seasonal, and premium products are expanding SKU counts. This complexity increases picking and palletizing challenges. Research has identified order picking/packing, shipping, and receiving as the most inefficient processes for 20–30% of warehouse managers surveyed.[3] Automation can help manage variety without compromising speed or accuracy.

D2C AND OMNICHANNEL RETAIL

Beverage companies now fulfill orders for big-box retailers, convenience stores, and direct-to-consumer subscriptions. Each channel has unique requirements. These operations require flexible automation that supports multi-channel fulfilment from a single DC.

SPEED AND SERVICE PRESSURE

On-time, in-full (OTIF) delivery is now a board-level metric. Effective automation can help improve fulfillment cycle time and order accuracy, helping companies meet service level agreements. Honeywell Intelligrated's beverage supply chain automation systems are engineered for high-speed throughput and minimal downtime.

SUSTAINABILITY PRESSURE

Packaging is getting lighter, waste reduction is a priority, and energy efficiency is under scrutiny. Automation supports these goals by reducing material handling errors and optimizing energy use.

COLD CHAIN COMPLIANCE

Chilled products require faster handling and fewer manual touches. Automation helps provide consistent temperature control and reduces spoilage, thus supporting cold chain systems to maintain compliance while improving operational efficiency.

2. Interact Analysis, "Warehouse Automation – 2024", Rueben Scriven, Rowan Stott, 2024 [Accessed Sep 1, 2025]

3. Newcastle Systems WP, Analyzing the Business Impact of Inefficient Motion in Warehousing, VDC Research, 2021 [Accessed Oct 10,2025]

THE OUTCOMES THAT MATTER TO SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS

3



THROUGHPUT (CASES/HOUR)

Automation enables significantly higher throughput, supporting peak demand and seasonal surges with consistent performance, often without requiring facility expansion.

LABOR COST PER UNIT

Automated systems can help substantially reduce reliance on temporary labor and mitigate the pressure of rising wages. Robotics and conveyor solutions streamline repetitive tasks and enhance safety.





ORDER ACCURACY

Improved order accuracy is a key benefit that reduces chargebacks and boosts customer satisfaction. Integrated systems facilitate precise picking and packing, supporting promotions and customization efforts.

COLD CHAIN INTEGRITY

Reliable temperature control is crucial for protecting brand reputation and meeting regulatory standards. Automation minimizes dwell time and manual handling to help ensure product integrity.





FULFILMENT CYCLE TIME

Faster cycle times are achievable with optimized solutions, enabling rapid delivery options like next-day service and supporting direct-to-consumer (D2C) models.

HOW WE CAN HELP

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Proven Automation, Purpose-Built for Beverage

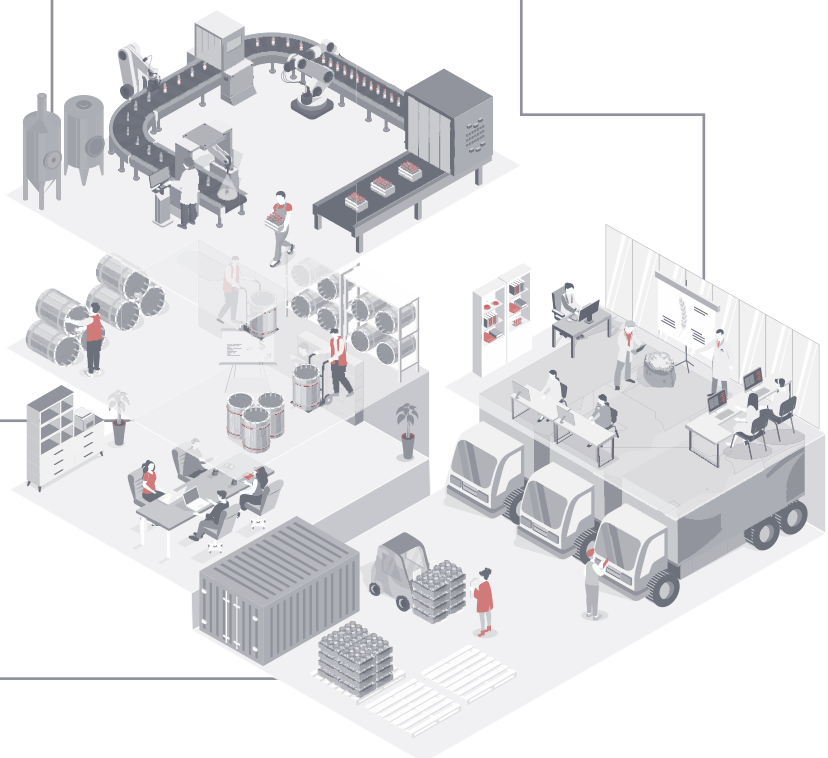
As a supply chain leader, you need more than technology - you need a partner who delivers value at every step. Honeywell Intelligrated offers a world-class portfolio of automation solutions, tailored for the unique demands of beverage supply chains. But our commitment goes further: we combine deep industry expertise with hands-on solutions consulting and dedicated project management, helping to accelerate your automation journey from concept to go-live and beyond. Trusted by the world's leading brands, we unify production, storage, fulfilment, and shipping, eliminating silos and unlocking real-time visibility. Our integrated approach, backed by end-to-end lifecycle support, means robotics, software, and controls work together efficiently. With Honeywell Intelligrated, you gain a strategic partner focused on maximizing uptime, driving efficiency, and creating measurable value for your business.

Cold chain ready hardware
Our systems are engineered for chilled environments, enabling uptime and compliance. They operate reliably in sub-zero conditions and integrate with temperature monitoring tools.

Lifecycle support
From design to integration and service, Honeywell supports beverage operations globally. Our experience can help deliver smooth deployment and long-term reliability.

WES with real-time visibility
Honeywell's Momentum WES provides actionable insights and control across the DC. It helps managers optimize labour, manage exceptions, and maintain flow under pressure.

Modular conveyor and palletizing systems
Honeywell Intelligrated's modular platforms scale with SKU changes and seasonal peaks. They support high-speed sorting and stacking across a variety beverage formats.



IS YOUR FULFILMENT OPERATION BUILT TO KEEP UP?

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Use this checklist to help determine the operational needs of your beverage DCs and think about the next steps:

- [ ] Do you handle more than 100 SKUs across multiple formats?
- [ ] Are you seeing rising labor costs or shortages?
- [ ] Do you fulfil across multiple channels (retail, D2C, export)?
- [ ] Are cold chain compliance and energy efficiency top concerns?
- [ ] Would your current system be bottlenecked by a 2x increase in volume?

If you answered “yes” to three or more of the above questions, it’s time to explore automation that delivers measurable results.

Schedule an Automation Readiness Assessment with Our Beverage Team



For more information

https://automation.honeywell.com/us/en/campaigns/warehouse-automation/beverage-supply-chain-automation-solutions

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01 | 12/25

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