
Support for helpful connectivity

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The new filling machines from SIG now come with industry-standard OPC Unified Architecture connectivity built in as part of its ongoing efforts to drive greater flexibility in food and beverage manufacturing. This enables horizontal machine-to-machine and vertical communication within the entire production plant – from shop floor to top floor. The data exchange standard helps for secure, reliable and platform-independent industrial communications, helping to drive smart, connected and fully integrated systems. In addition to this built-in offering, all existing filling machines can also now be retrofitted with a simple plug-and-play installation providing OPC-UA connectivity. It is delivered through the Connector Module of SIG's Plant 360 Controller solution. This advanced monitoring and control solution was designed to optimise every part of food and beverage production by gradually integrating all plant processes and systems into one platform, no matter what equipment, supplier or PLC is used.

“SIG is committed to driving maximum connectivity and integration within our customers’ digital factories. And to enable this, all our new filling machines, as well as automatic magazines and downstream solutions, are using industry-standard OPC Unified Architecture, meaning that connectivity is simply built in from the start.”

- Stefan Mergel, Senior Product Manager Equipment

Having this connectivity either built in or retrofitted on the systems gives food and beverage manufacturers the greatest possible freedom and flexibility when choosing their other manufacturing components and technology partners. This ultimately means that customer can configure a digital factory based precisely on their needs and demands.

For manufacturers, flexibility in their operations has become an increasingly critical issue. With growing industry demands, rapidly changing consumer trends, and the ongoing challenge of COVID-19, manufacturers are seeking to make their production lines more flexible, individualised and agile to handle periods of higher outputs and faster product changes, while also driving down costs. As a result of this, many are looking to IoT-enabled systems, data and automation solutions to turn their filling plants into intelligent and connected factories. Mergel continues:

“Food and beverage production is rapidly changing and becoming more demanding than ever. Filling plants are operating on an unprecedented level with higher demands, growing competition, and ever-shorter production cycles – even more so due to COVID-19. Now is the time for companies to step up their digital transformation and ensure they can be more resilient, productive and agile in their future operations.”

Enabling this connectivity within its filling machines, systems and components is another aspect of the solution-driven Smart Factory platform – a drive to deliver IoT-enabled systems and technical services that transform filling plants into connected factories that secure the highest possible efficiency, flexibility and quality for customers.