

THINKING ABOUT CANNING YOUR CRAFT BEVERAGE?

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*WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE
YOU BUY A CANNING LINE*



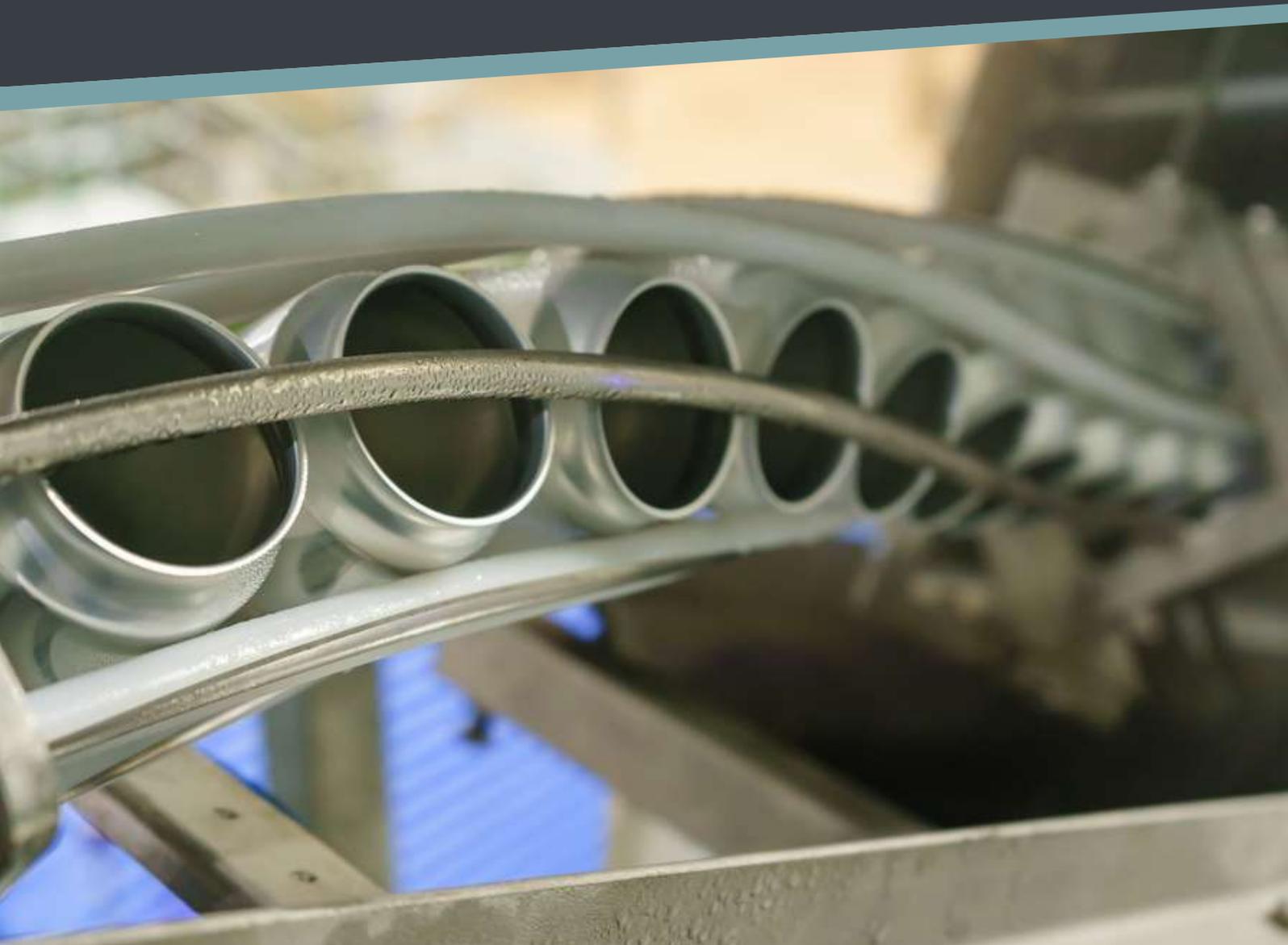
WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

Outlining your end game will help determine what you need to know to get started.

Do you want to:

1. Provide take-home options for your brewery, cidery or distillery
2. Make the jump to distribution
3. Package seasonal, specialty, or individual drinks that need their own canning line

Deciding what you want to do with your canned drinks helps you determine what size and type of machine you need!



WHAT ABOUT SPACE?

You will need to think about how to set up a space for your canning line and get prepared in advance.

Step 1:

Layout - Figure out how much automation you need and how much you want to produce. You need space for the canning line itself, pallets of cans, an area to stack the final product, accessory equipment, cold room storage and more.

Some craft producers fit their packaging lines in less than 100 square feet of space while some need an entire warehouse. Make sure you know your space so your canning system will fit into your facility.



Step 2:

Construction - What does your facility need to have in place before your canning line is installed?

- **Basic Utilities**
 - i. **Power** - Make sure you check the requirements for all equipment
 - ii. **Water** - Your canning system will need water for cleaning
 - iii. **Floor drain** - Water, cleaning liquid or product residue will need somewhere to go
 - iv. **Internet** - Some systems have controls that require a network cable or access to the Internet
- **Storage** - Where will you store your supplies and canned beverages?
 - i. **Can storage** - You need an area to hold pallets of empty cans
 - ii. **Cold room capacity** - It is important to understand how long you will store your inventory and the temperatures that keep the product fresh



Step 3:

Essential Supply Equipment - What do you need on hand to get your canning operation up and running?

For most beverages you will need:

- Brewers hoses and pumps
- Compressed air
- CO₂
- Liquid nitrogen (if you intend to produce non-carbonated beverages)



WHAT CAN YOU AFFORD TO BUY?

Understanding your finances, goals and the total cost of ownership for a canning line are important things to consider when making a purchasing decision.

1. Understanding the price of canning lines.

- **Value** – Some machines are cheaper than others but it is important to understand the value that each provides. Ask yourself these questions:
 - i. How is the machine built? Is it going to stand the test of time?
 - ii. Is the system flexible for your growing needs? Can you change can sizes, switch out different types of beverages, or upgrade as you grow?
 - iii. What kind of support does the canning company offer? If you break something, how fast can you get back up and running? It is crucial that you find a partner in canning, not just a company that will sell you a machine.
- **Financing** – Do you have enough money to purchase the machine? Many companies offer financing options or can connect you with a financing partner.
- **Installation** – Installation by a canning professional is usually required to ensure that you are set up and trained for your specific needs.

2. What is your total cost of ownership? The initial sales price of a canning line is only a small part of the total cost to you as a business.

- **Speed** – The throughput or number of cans per minute is an important component of your production model. Make sure you get the fastest machine you can afford because speed and efficiency ultimately save you in labor costs and get more product on the shelf for you to sell.
- **Uptime** – Having a machine that is up and running is critical for success. When you have to spend too many hours making adjustments for different can sizes, cleaning for new beverages, or waiting for a mobile canner to get you on the schedule – you lose the ability to produce.



- **Downtime** – Every canning line will have some downtime. Having a plan for how to handle that is an important aspect of the total cost of the machine. Plan for maintenance and understand shipping times for new parts. How will you handle it when something breaks, when you have an issue with foam, or when you have employees that don't understand how to can? Your canning line will have issues and it is important that you know how you will handle it, or you will lose time and money.
- **Training** – Is your team prepared to run the canning line? Make sure the company you buy from can provide the training your team needs to be successful.
- **Support** – When you do experience an issue, does your canning partner answer the phone? How will they work with you to get you up and running with as little downtime as possible? Excellent customer support is crucial to your success. Days spent waiting on new parts or lost time trying to solve an issue on your own can affect your bottom line and stack up unforeseen costs in no time.

3. How are you going to realize a return on your investment? Here are three things to consider when evaluating purchase price.

- **Machine quality** – How well is your machine built? Is it made in-house to meet your requirements, or is it assembled from parts that are purchased from elsewhere? This will be important for the longevity of the machine and help you understand what the process will look like if your machine breaks, requires spare parts or needs an upgrade. Also, is it flexible and adaptable to grow with you when you want to add new products or sizes?
- **Resale** – Make sure you check out the resale value of your machine. Hopefully, you will grow so fast that you will need to continuously size up in your equipment – will your machine sell easily if you find yourself in that boat?
- **Quality of the packaged product** – Oxygen in your beverages has a significant impact on the flavor, quality, and shelf life of your canned beverage. Make sure the canning line you purchase is built to manage dissolved oxygen and maintain the quality of the drink you serve in a can. Understand that leaky seams and under- or over-filled cans can create problems you might not have foreseen.



DO YOU HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO RUN A CANNING LINE?

Understand your staffing and training needs before you get started so you can be successful. Create a timeline for installing your system to make sure you are staffed, trained, and ready to go. Pay special attention to any safety, permitting, or regulatory requirements that may arise so you can maximize your success with canning. Also be sure to set aside time for your dedicated operators during the install so they can understand the system.



What else will you need?

Do you have the relationships and contacts you need to purchase everything you'll need for canning? Make sure you have something lined up for:

- A. Cans
- B. Lids
- C. Labels
- D. Boxes
- E. Packout materials

Ancillary or accessory equipment helps your canning line be more efficient and easier to run. Consider buying these accessories before you get started.

- A **depalletizer** helps you get cans into the canning line quickly and efficiently
- A **twist rinse** cleans the cans prior to filling
- A **date coder** marks your cans for freshness dates
- A **dissolved oxygen** meter helps you measure the amount of oxygen sneaking into your product
- **Seam inspection equipment** allows you to keep seams tight so you don't waste product or introduce oxygen
- **Fill-checking equipment** makes sure your fill levels are optimal
- A **labeler** affixes a label onto the can
- A **multi-packer** (handle applicator) creates six packs or four packs
- **In-feed and out-feed** automation helps you run efficiently

In summary, deciding to can your craft beverage is a huge step towards getting more product to market and making your drinks more readily available. Purchasing a canning line can seem like a daunting task. However, with the right amount of research and a well-thought-out plan in advance, purchasing a canning line can take your business to the next level. Customers love the versatility of cans and will show you that canning your craft beverages is worth the investment!

