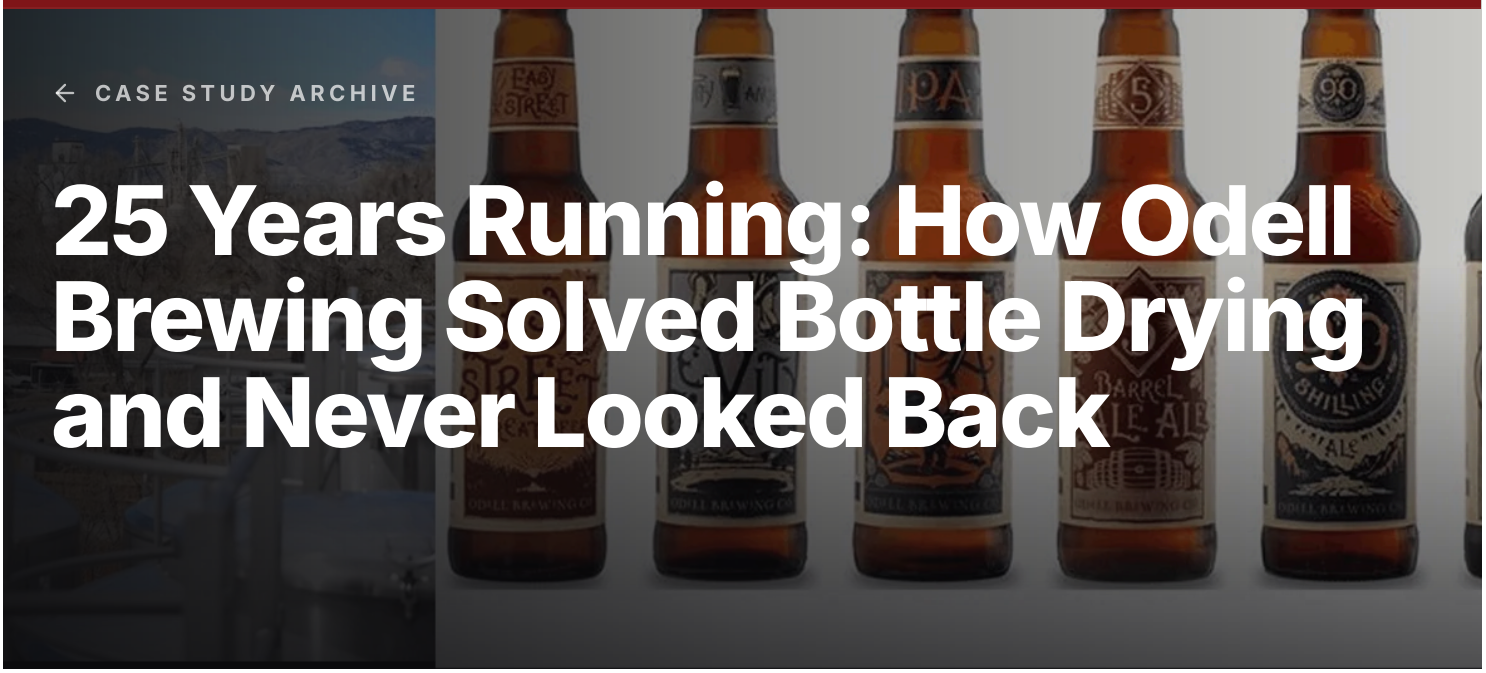
SONIC AIR SYSTEMS



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25 Years Running: How Odell Brewing Solved Bottle Drying and Never Looked Back



Key Takeaways

- ✓ Odell Brewing's compressed air dryer could not reliably remove foam rinse from 12oz and 22oz glass bottles at 120 bottles per minute. Labels were flagging and slipping on wet glass, compromising the brewery's packaging quality.

- ✓ Krones, Odell's labeling equipment manufacturer, recommended a Sonic High Velocity Air Blower with two XE Air Knives. The system handles speeds up to 750 bottles per minute.
- ✓ The Sonic system has been in continuous service for over 25 years, too! Odell shifted production to mostly cans for today's market demands. The Sonic air knife system was reconfigured to also dry pull tabs and to eliminate stress corrosion and bottom cracking on inkjet coding. Replacement parts were sourced in 2024, and a new flex hose was fitted in 2026, keeping the original installation running without full replacement.

Overview

Odell Brewing Co., established in 1989 in Fort Collins, Colorado, is one of the founding craft breweries of the American craft beer movement. By the late 1990s, consumer demand had pushed the all-draft brewery to add bottled beer to its lineup. The 16,000-barrel producer began bottling 12oz and 22oz beers at line speeds of 120 bottles per minute.

Fort Collins sits in a region with eighty-eight breweries serving the local area, and Odell's reputation for quality was a commercial asset that extended to how their product looked on the shelf. For a craft brand, packaging aesthetics are not incidental. A label that flags, wrinkles, or fails to adhere cleanly is a quality issue.

The problem Odell encountered was one that many bottling operations face when scaling up: their compressed air dryer could not reliably remove rinse water and foam rinse from the bottles before labeling. A four-nozzle compressed air system was in place, but it lacked the volume to shear foam rinse from the glass surface consistently at production speed. Labels would flag or slip on wet bottles, and the line speeds had to be reduced too. That was not an acceptable option.

Solution

Odell consulted with Krones, their labeling equipment manufacturer, about improving drying performance ahead of the label station. Krones recommended Sonic Air Systems, and the craft brewery purchased a High Velocity Air Blower with two XE Air Knives.

The air knives were positioned opposite one another on either side of the conveyor, delivering high-velocity airflow across both sides of the bottle simultaneously as it travels through the station. A sensor detects line flow and shuts the labeler down if bottle flow thins out, protecting against label waste.

The system is rated to handle line speeds up to 750 bottles per minute, giving Odell significant headroom above their 120 bpm starting point as the brewery continued to grow.

Result

With the Sonic system in place, Odell Brewing's line speeds were met consistently without labeling issues. The high-velocity airflow removed foam rinse reliably from both bottle sizes across the full range of production speeds.

What distinguishes the Odell installation is not just that the system worked, but how long it has kept working. Odell now offers canned beverages too, and Sonic's blower-powered air knife system was reconfigured to also effectively dry beer cans and pull tabs after filling, prior to packaging. The original installation from 1999 remained in continuous service for over 25 years. Replacement parts were sourced in 2024, and a new flex hose was fitted in 2026. The core system has not been replaced.

For a capital purchase in a production environment, 25-plus years of service from the original equipment is an unusual outcome. It reflects both the durability of the Sonic system and the relatively low maintenance demands of a centrifugal blower air knife setup compared to compressed air alternatives.

Odell Brewing is now one of the most established craft breweries in the American West, with distribution across multiple states. The drying system that Krones recommended in 1999 is still doing its job. Contact Sonic to discuss a system for your bottling line.

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