



Perspectives

DRINKTEC 2025 – REVIEW AND OUTLOOK

Innovation and fresh impetus

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At the world's leading trade show for their branch of industry, national and international beverage producers met with systems providers and suppliers from across the globe. We provide a summary of the highlights of the exhibition and KHS booth and look to the future.

NON-RETURNABLE GLASS

RETURNABLE GLASS

NON-RETURNABLE PET

CAN

RETURNABLE PET

PHOTOGRAPHY / ILLUSTRATION

Frank Reinhold

COVER PHOTO

As at every drinktec, in 2025 KHS was also one of the biggest exhibitors: a key technology partner to the industry, the company again had a lot to show and tell visitors to its booth.

For five days in September 2025, Munich was once again the hub of the beverage and liquid food sector; with over 1,100 exhibitors and almost 60,000 trade visitors from 164 countries, drinktec illustrated the industry's sense of new departure and drive for innovation anew. Under the motto of "lifestyle and health", the trade show focused on the circular economy, resource efficiency and digitalization, plus on current and future product concepts.

The industry's prime objective is to lower its carbon footprint and save on resources: besides presenting new ideas in packaging and process efficiency and lightweighting in all container categories, the production lines on display scored with 100% recycled PET processing, improved cleaning processes and lower energy and water consumption. Under the heading of "Data2Value", the opportunities and limitations of AI were also intensively discussed during the event, with numerous companies exhibiting their digital tools and open interfaces. These enable machines from various manufacturers to communicate with one another on the line.



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One way to save resources is to cut down on the amount of material used; here, a prime example of lightweighting that KHS has developed together with Husky Technologies.



Digital tools such as KHS ConnectApp boost efficiency and transparency and ensure that all machines on a line communicate with one another.

KHS: line concept in focus

As a leading systems supplier, KHS consequently showcased its integrated line expertise for glass, PET and beverage cans at drinktec 2025. “We continue to stand for progressive technologies and services that can be combined to create smart turnkey systems,” says Tobias Wetzel, CSO and member of the KHS Executive Management Board. “They generate considerable added value when it comes to line efficiency, resource consumption and the machine footprint.”

One innovative step in this direction is the new [InnoPET FreshSafe QuadBlock](#) that was presented to the public at drinktec. This turnkey system combines stretch blow molding, barrier technology, filling and labeling in a single space-saving, resource-efficient block. Regarding line management, various established and further developed software solutions also fully adhere to KHS’ holistic line concept, among them Innoline Basic Line Monitoring, Innoline Flex Control and [KHS ConnectApp Guide](#). Under the

heading of “line connectivity”, KHS demonstrated its cloud links and secure network architecture for real-time data access and protected OT systems.

“As our key platform for innovation, drinktec makes the hearts of our engineers and sales personnel beat faster.”



Tobias Wetzel
CSO and member of the KHS Executive Management
Board

Sustainable packaging

KHS also had visitors in Munich convinced by its sustainable, market-proven packaging systems. One of these is Nature MultiPack that turns PET bottles or cans into packs with nothing more than a few dots of adhesive. This saves up to 90% in packaging materials compared to the classic use of shrink film. Another example is InnoPET Plamax technology that with its wafer-thin, glass-like barrier combines effective product protection with PET recycling by type in a consistent move towards the circular economy.

“For us, drinktec is and will always be our key platform for innovation,” claims Wetzel. “It makes the hearts of our engineers and sales personnel beat faster. As opposed to any virtual format, visitors here can experience systems first-hand; they can feel their quality and see how precisely they operate with their own eyes. But above all, the live show permits them to talk to the experts one-on-one. This is precisely where trust and partnership are born and technology is transferred – between individuals communicating in person.”



Engineering skill and passion

This is also expressed by the new KHS slogan that's visually depicted as a heart made up of machine parts: “Engineered with heart. Filled by passion.” It combines top engineering skills with the passion KHS personnel have for their work and perfectly sums up the company's attitude: in development,

production and service, commitment to long-term customer success holds top priority. “Our slogan is designed to encourage discussion and strengthen KHS’ consistent brand image,” emphasizes Sandra Wapniewski.

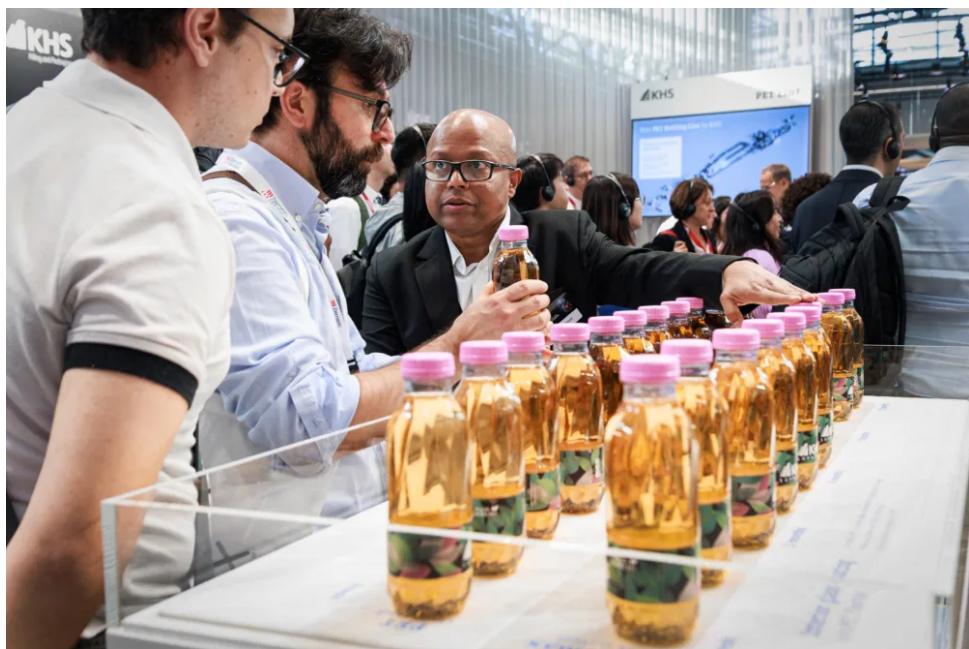


Sandra Wapniewski
Head of Corporate Communication, KHS

“Our approach of placing the line at the center of our storytelling was extremely well received by guests at the KHS booth.”

International audience

As head of Corporate Communication at KHS, she's also responsible for the Dortmund engineering company's trade show appearances. By way of summary, she states, "at drinktec, visitors from all over the world discovered that KHS stands for technology that inspires and for people who work for our customers with passion. Our approach of placing the line at the center of our storytelling has shown them how well our machines and systems function together, thus demonstrating our extensive expertise as a holistic systems provider. This was extremely well received by guests at the KHS booth."



FreshSafe PET product protection provides much longer shelf lives of up to six months, particularly useful for markets with hot summers and seasonal peaks in demand.



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International audience: exhibition visitors from Asia show interest in grouping with the help of robots, where packs are formed into layers.

From flagship to standard

What can be expected in the next three years until the industry meets up again for drinktec? Circular packaging and resource efficiency are to gain a license to operate: low-water processes, energy- and heat-recovery methods, material reduction, reuse/refilling and optimum recyclability are establishing themselves right across the board, driven by worldwide regulation and increasingly critical consumers. Suitable upgrades that cut the use of resources by a two-figure percentage are now ready for market and being scaled into brownfield modernizations.

AI applications in practice

The trade show has firmly anchored AI as a transformation field in the beverage industry. The application thereof no longer has the status of a pilot project; AI is instead being rolled out at line and factory level – from predictive maintenance and self-learning systems through resource-conserving cleaning processes and automated quality control

to recipe development. Integrated line-monitoring systems with cloud connectivity and operator apps are becoming standard, with reservations less about the technology itself and more about change management and data quality.

“Only in close cooperation with our customers can promising ideas be turned into market-ready innovations.”



Tobias Wetzel
CSO and member of the KHS Executive Management
Board

Transformation partner

Beverage producers are no longer looking for 'just' machinery. Instead, they want systems that meet their transformation targets for energy, circularity, cost efficiency and speed. Machine and systems manufacturers must evolve from being 'mere' technology suppliers to becoming a strategic partner for change.

KHS has long understood this. "For us, innovation means providing answers to questions the market perhaps isn't asking yet but which will dominate in the future," claims Tobias Wetzel. "Only through lasting close cooperation with our customers can we turn promising ideas into market-ready systems and thus innovations." On that note, we can already look forward to the results KHS will be presenting in Munich in September 2028.

Any further questions?

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