

INTELLIGENT DISTILLING WITH IGNITION

A CASE STUDY FEATURING
THE BARDSTOWN BOURBON COMPANY





The Bardstown Bourbon Company (BBC) began its operations in 2016 by blending the art and science of distilling at its highly sophisticated and innovative facility in Bardstown, Kentucky.

After four years of rapid growth and soaring demand that had its distillers producing 5X more bourbon than initially projected, BBC needed a partner to help deploy a more sophisticated SCADA system that would allow for efficiency gains through production flexibility and more transparency into their operations.



THE CHALLENGE: A BASIC SCADA SOLUTION

As production was rapidly scaling, BBC knew its initial SCADA solution could not provide the level of real-time insight into operations needed. Therefore, their in-house plant engineer began working on a new SCADA system with Inductive Automation's (IA) Ignition platform that would allow them to see, control, and analyze facility-wide data in real-time.

Because of how fast operations were growing, they realized they would not have the bandwidth to deploy a new solution as quickly as they needed to, so they needed a trusted partner to help tackle this implementation.

THE SOLUTION: A COMPREHENSIVE IGNITION-BASED SYSTEM

BBC was introduced to Flexware Innovation while attending an Ignition training at one of their Midwest offices. A partnership developed quickly as they discovered not only was Flexware a Gold Certified Premier Integrator for Ignition, but the company also had engineers located close to the BBC distillery.

Because Flexware approaches every project with a customer-centric mindset, its engineers first spent time diving into BBC's unique process to fully understand what they were looking to achieve with Ignition. Therefore, instead of just performing a straight conversion from their old SCADA system to the new Ignition-based system, Flexware served as a consultant that worked closely with operators to understand what control features and data would be most beneficial for achieving real efficiency and production gains.



“The software control package we implemented is the first to be commissioned in the spirits industry, and Flexware helped us get it up and running faster than we could have ever imagined.”

THE OUTCOME

Getting the most from a manufacturing processes to meet business objectives requires thoughtful integration. Flexware incorporated operator input during the development process, so operators were quickly comfortable with using the new platform, reducing training and deployment time significantly.

The new SCADA system also brought many much-needed features including real-time trending and automated reporting, detailed insight into all aspects of the distilling process, and elimination of manual and double data entry. Once everyone understood the power in Ignition and Flexware’s capabilities, every department was reaching out to have custom reports created.

FUTURE PLANS

During deployment, Flexware not only filled the immediate need of being a resource for Ignition development, but their engineers also became trusted advisors. Therefore, as the distillery expands and focuses on identifying bottlenecks, they will continue to look to Flexware to help quickly determine the best solutions to address these items.

Because of the unique relationship the two organizations have developed, BBC has been able to trust Flexware enough to provide their engineers with insight into its five-to-ten-year roadmap and what they ultimately would like to achieve in this time frame. As a result, the two companies are now working together to build a bottling facility with a comprehensive distillery integration solution that includes resource scheduling and overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) functionality. This partial MES solution will further reduce operational redundancy and improve efficiency.

