

Beer Bust

The smart keg technology transforming the pub and restaurant industry

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Although there are still strict COVID-19 restrictions in place, pubs and restaurants are now allowed to serve customers outdoors, which means that many people will be heading out for a celebratory meal and a pint. It's not just the patrons that are celebrating; the hospitality industry can now breathe a small sigh of relief as they are able to conduct business (albeit on a smaller scale) once again.

But, as the industry prepares to start selling once again, a number of keg thefts have been reported. Earlier this month, 43 kegs were stolen from Arundel Brewery at Ford Airfield Industrial Estate. Even though the kegs were empty, the loss still amounts to more than £2,000 since each keg costs about £50. This is not just a problem in the UK; global keg losses are estimated to cost the brewing industry between £220m and £365m each year.

With breweries and distilleries closed most of the year due to lockdown, keg losses are particularly distressing to suppliers and pubs that have been hit hard by COVID-19 restrictions. As the hospitality industry re-opens, publicans, hoteliers, and restaurateurs are focused on reducing any unnecessary cost and waste.

The causes of keg loss are not limited to theft. Wastage and loss can also occur due to:



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Matthew Margetts, Smarter Technologies

Distributors gathering the wrong brewery's kegs when collecting empty containers
Identification tags being knocked off
Tags rendered unreadable by wear and tear
Event organisers failing to return kegs
Stolen kegs being sold to scrap metal merchants

The loss of kegs can add millions of pounds to annual capital costs for the industry, which is why those involved in the beer keg supply chain are turning to smart technologies for real-time tracking and visibility.

The smart technology keeping beer kegs safe

The best way to prevent theft, damage and poor handling of beer kegs is to increase the visibility of their location and condition throughout the supply chain. These days, kegs can be fitted with smart keg tracking sensors connected to the Internet of Things (IoT). Reporting information to a central management dashboard, these sensors offer real-time visibility of the entire keg fleet, at any time, from anywhere in the world.

With both GPS and RFID technology, smart sensors not only track a keg's location, but can provide a wealth of data on a keg's current condition, including temperature, tilt, levels, tamper shock and movement. If there is a change in location or condition that could signify theft, accidental damage or tampering, the system will send an instant alert to any connected device. This means that swift action can be taken to remedy the situation.

Along with preventing keg loss, the data from a smart keg tracking system can also be analysed and used to optimise the beer keg supply chain efficiency. For example, a supply chain manager can identify and address common bottlenecks, thereby speeding up the supply process, reducing overheads and improving the customer experience.

With total coverage, visibility and control, breweries, distilleries and the hospitality industry can prevent keg loss and have a better chance of remaining profitable in these trying times.

Cheers to that!

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About the author

Matthew Margetts is Director of Sales and Marketing at [Smarter Technologies](#). His background includes working for blue-chip companies such as AppNexus, AOL/ Verizon, and Microsoft in the UK, Far East and Australia.

About Smarter Technologies

Smarter Technologies tracks, monitors and recovers assets across the globe in real time, providing asset tracking systems to the open market and fulfilling the world's most complex asset tracking requirements. Our services cover a vast array of business sectors, products and equipment from container or pallet tracking to military-grade devices; and can be used across a broad spectrum of industries.

As a leading IoT company, we also provide smart building solutions for modern businesses, offering wire-free, battery-powered and low-cost IoT smart sensor technology. Our solutions will put an end to scheduled maintenance and help businesses utilise their building's efficiency, benefitting from real-time alerts and facilities management tools that will bring them into the 21st century.

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