

The Soft Drinks Companion

A Technical Handbook
for the Beverage Industry

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Preface

With this handbook, I am not attempting to compete with the numerous textbooks available on the subject of beverage manufacturing technology. These books, whether written in simple layman's language or in elaborate technical jargon, generally cover adequately, in detail and in scope, the technical processes of beverage manufacture. All the relevant issues involved, from water treatment through ingredients, syrup making, filling, and packaging, are usually aptly dealt with in a systematic step-by-step manner. Ancillary matters such as quality, hygiene, inventory control, costing, and general troubleshooting are often added in appropriate dedicated chapters.

Also, I do not aim to compete with the sophisticated in-house technical manuals compiled by large international beverage manufacturing conglomerates for benefit of their technical management teams and operational staff. These chunky tomes aim to cover in minute detail and in sophisticated orderly fashion every technical aspect of the beverage manufacturing process, and indeed, they do not miss much. So then, what is my companion handbook all about?

Basically, it is an anthology of items relevant to technical and sometimes general issues I encountered in the 30-odd years of my association with the beverage industry. I think that these issues have either not been specifically mentioned in the textbooks and manuals or that they have not been sufficiently elaborated upon in them. This is not due to any fault of these books and manuals. By their nature and function, they must necessarily be prescriptive and authoritative and, as such, do not allow for theoretical discussion or academic debate.

The chapters included in this anthology are presented in seemingly haphazard fashion, in no specific sequential order. They are of subject matter that most production and quality personnel encountered or could eventually encounter at one stage or another of their careers. This anthology attempts to elaborate on some of the technical concepts that in the rush and turmoil of routine working hours are accepted by technical and other staff at face value, without probing into their real significances and meanings.

Also, this handbook, in accordance with its description as a *Soft Drinks Companion* endeavors to supplement the knowledge and expertise of technical staff members of not-so-big organizations, who have not been fortunate enough to receive the training afforded to their equivalents in large international conglomerates. They do not always enjoy the advantages of having a head office technical center at their beck and call.

Furthermore, this *Soft Drinks Companion* handbook hopes to assist the individual, new, would-be beverage-manufacturing entrepreneur who is usually clueless as to what is technically involved in such a venture. The anthology will, in one form or another, give such a person a basic idea of the technical issues involved, albeit these are not presented in as methodical and systematic a format as found in general textbooks and manuals.

I also attempted, by means of this handbook, to cater to the general curious public and to convey the message that making soft drinks is not, as often described, a simple matter of putting some sugar, bubbles, and flavor into a bottle of water. Okay, it is not as complicated as sending a space mission to Mars, but then — read on.

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