



## Press Release

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International jury recognises exceptional man/machine interface

### ***red dot award* for new, user-friendly operator interface for SIG Combibloc filling machines**

**October 2008.** The new, exceptionally user-friendly interface for operating, monitoring and adjusting filling machines from SIG Combibloc has now been honoured with the *red dot award: communication design 2008*, one of the world's foremost design awards. The jury, made up of international experts, was particularly impressed by the logical menu navigation, the use of graphics and the resultant ease of use of the communications interface between man and machine, created by SIG Combibloc in co-operation with design expert Professor Thomas Hofmann.

Peter Holzkämper, responsible for visual display systems at SIG Combibloc: "The interface is where man and machine meet, providing for communication between the operator of a filling machine and the machine itself. In developing the new HMI (Human/Machine Interface), our main focus was on creating a solution that was ergonomically and functionally the best option. The new solution is self-explanatory and language-independent and can be fitted to each platform and infrastructure as required. The operator has all the essential information on machinery and equipment function right in front of him and is able to check these details at a moment's notice and respond quickly in the event of any irregularities. Our intention was to further simplify the operating process of SIG Combibloc's filling machines using the new HMI solution. For our customers, ultimately, this operator convenience means even more efficient production".

The new, standardised interface is operated entirely via a 19" touch screen, from which all the necessary production and maintenance processes are controlled. The

display can be swivelled so the operator can adjust it to suit his own position and also, for instance, to avoid any reflections that might be falling on the screen. Designer Thomas Hofmann says: “The entire interface has been configured to allow rapid, accurate communication and for this reason there are only a small number of separate elements to the design. All these elements are language-independent and indicated by colours and icons. In order to maximise the ease of inspection, data that belong together are grouped together. Higher-level functions are arranged at the top of the screen, with secondary or more specialised functions and controls further down. The layout is organised on the basis of clear design and function precepts, which we have identified through ergonomic research. The design of the entire interface is adapted to the user’s operating practice and is intended to make the user’s communication with the interface as straightforward as possible. Frequently used tools can be accessed very quickly and easily; functions that are more seldom used are arranged under appropriate menus and do not create an unnecessary distraction for the user”.

For food companies, having the new, improved HMI on their SIG Combibloc filling machines is an important step towards making the production process even more efficient. Franck Fulachier, Development Manager R&D at Campbell’s France, describes the system in practice: “The operation of the new system is easy to learn and much less complex than other, purely text-based systems. With its unambiguous, language-independent navigation, the display system of the new HMI establishes the graphic reference to the individual machine components. The operator requires far less time to familiarise himself with the HMI and is able to respond more quickly and systematically in the event of any irregularities. For us, that means an obvious gain in respect of more efficient production”.

### **A glance at the basics**

In the Graphical User Interface section, organisers have been able to discern a clear trend in all the submissions for the *red dot design award*. Professor Peter Zec, initiator of the *red dot design award*: “Touch screens are being used more and more often in modern product design and operator interfaces are becoming increasingly complex. In order to make the advantages of this technology useable and to make the use of these systems in practice as straightforward as possible, what was required was a well-defined creative solution. When developing a Graphical User Interface product, the designer’s chief purpose is to make the system self-explanatory. If there is a logical menu navigation system and it is clear to the user at

first glance which button has which function, there is nothing to distract the user from the things that are of actual relevance for him”.

With more than 10,000 submissions in the categories Product Design, Communication Design and Design Concept, the *red dot design award* is one of the foremost design competitions in the world. Since 1955, outstanding examples of design quality have been selected each year by the Design Zentrum in Essen (Germany) and officially recognised at a special ceremony.

**Caption (new-HMI):**

The new human/machine interface (HMI) solution for operating, monitoring and adjusting filling machines from SIG Combibloc has now been honoured with the *red dot award: communication design 2008*.

**Photo: SIG Combibloc**

*SIG Combibloc is one of the world's leading system suppliers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. In 2007 the company achieved a turnover of 1,235 million Euro with around 4,000 employees in 40 countries. SIG Combibloc belongs to SIG Holding AG in Switzerland, which is part of the New Zealand based Rank Group.*

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