

# Suntory & DHL's DigiHaul: Asset Right – A Case Study on Driving Value Through Partnership and Fleet Sizing



*Suntory's Coleford Production Site*

Suntory is one of the world's key names in the Beverage & Food industry - with Suntory products such as the popular Lucozade and Ribena brands being distributed in 98% of all outlets in the UK<sup>1</sup>.

In 2024, Suntory transitioned its logistics operations to DHL Supply Chain for both distribution and warehousing. A key element of this partnership is the use of DigiHaul, DHL Supply Chain's Digital Freight solution. DigiHaul provides a flexible, cost-effective and environmentally conscious subcontraction solution to complement the stability of a core fleet. Integrating subcontraction into the transport solution has been essential to achieving meaningful cost savings versus a 100% own fleet model, particularly through the creation of value by DigiHaul by leveraging complementary transport profiles across their wider network.

## **Customer Challenge:**

Suntory produces Lucozade and Ribena for the UK market at its Coleford production site, where fluctuating output creates a volatile transport profile that cannot be efficiently served by a purely core fleet transport solution. To address this, the DigiHaul solution aided the design of an asset-right solution that intentionally leans into subcontracted capacity as the primary lever for cost and carbon efficiency. A lighter reliance on a core fleet simultaneously meets Suntory's commitment to driver roles and provides baseline stability, while also unlocking flexibility and reducing empty running.

The network covers two flows: Factory-clearance movements from Coleford into DHL's Nottinghamshire DC, and outbound deliveries from the DC to customer DCs. Together, these flows represent a seven-day operation and ~21,000 loads annually, volumes that benefit significantly from a model built to scale dynamically.

<sup>1</sup>Suntory (2023) 'About Us' [*Suntory Beverage and Food GB&I*] Available at: <https://suntorybeverageandfood-europe.com/en-gb/gbi/about-us/>. (Accessed 07.01.2026).

## DigiHaul Solution:

### Asset Right

For inbound factory-clearance movements from Coleford to the Nottinghamshire DC, around two-thirds of volume is completed by subcontractors, with the remainder handled by the core fleet. Outbound deliveries from the DC to customer DCs adopt a more traditional balanced share.

This strong lean towards subcontracting is driven by the nature of the Coleford profile: High volume, one-way flows with limited natural backhauls. These movements are optimally suited to subcontractors, and DigiHaul aggregates these movements with complementary work from its wider customer base. DigiHaul is therefore able to create efficient round trips back towards Coleford. This subcontraction enables more efficient round trips, reducing wasted empty miles and lowering operating costs compared with a predominantly own-fleet approach.

Crucially, this solution doesn't offer just financial benefits. Eliminating empty miles also removes their associated carbon emissions. The subcontract-led model therefore delivers a more flexible, cost-efficient, and lower-carbon operation than a predominantly own-fleet approach, while retaining a core fleet for stability.

### Growing A Partnership:

From contract award to first wheels turning in under three months, DHL were able to execute a rapid start-up of the Suntory transport solution focused on growing a successful partnership. During solution implementation DHL deployed a dedicated DigiHaul team on-site at both Coleford and Nottinghamshire, working hand in hand with the operation to ensure close

alignment, strong operational precision and rapid issue resolution. This hands on, highly engaged approach enabled strong relationships to be built, transforming an ambitious implementation into a thriving solution.

### Customer Benefits:

Overall, the use of DigiHaul results in significant value for Suntory – achieving annual multi-million GBP savings for Suntory, while also reducing empty running miles and therefore carbon footprint, compared to a traditional 100% own fleet solution. DigiHaul coordinates all communications between hauliers - simplifying communication between customer, 3PL and hauliers. This collaboration ensures clarity, speed and reliability across the network. Looking into the detail, the partnership between DHL and Suntory also drives operational excellence: DigiHaul manages the end-to-end process, overseeing haulier compliance, haulier onboarding, performance management and ongoing auditing to ensure consistent, transparent service delivery across the network. The effectiveness of this approach is reflected in DigiHaul's outstanding fulfilment rate of 99.9%.

*"I just wanted to take a moment to extend my sincere thanks for the fantastic support DHL and DigiHaul has provided throughout 2025. It's been a record-breaking year for Suntory with volumes up 17% year-on-year, DHL's partnership has been key to making this possible".* Alpesh Mistry, Commercial Director, Suntory GB&I

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