THE OPPORTUNITY

Built for the shift.

A workforce safety support program built around hydration, personal cooling and dependable crew supply.



CONCEPT VISUALIZATION • PRODUCT CONFIGURATION AND CO-BRANDING ARE PROVISIONAL

ICHOR and Rituo have a credible opportunity to build a recurring business serving people who work in demanding heat. The concept brings familiar hydration products, reusable cooling wearables and practical jobsite replenishment into one coordinated commercial offer. Its promise is straightforward: make it easier for employers to equip crews with products workers want to use and buyers can reorder with confidence.

The combination is commercially attractive because the categories serve different buying occasions. Water, electrolyte powders, sports drinks and freezer pops can generate replenishment orders. Cooling products and crew stations can establish the relationship, support seasonal onboarding and introduce additional sites. Over time, a successful pilot could develop into a multi-site supply agreement.

The commercial thesis

Win an initial crew, prove product acceptance and delivered economics, then earn recurring orders across the employer’s locations. The durable value lies in reliable service, useful products and repeat purchasing.

The partnership fit is complementary. ICHOR brings beverage experience, supplier relationships and a hydration identity. Rituo brings an existing cooling product and a wearable-focused brand. Together, they can pursue a focused workforce offer while retaining distinct businesses. This is a promising program to validate toward the 2027 heat season; launch economics and final product specifications remain to be established.

Water is the foundation. Electrolyte choices and personal cooling belong within the employer’s broader heat program, alongside rest, shade, acclimatization and training. [4,5]

DEMAND AND MARKET SCALE

A substantial need. A focused entry.

Start with crews that routinely work in heat and employers with a clear purchasing owner.

Construction, paving, roofing, utilities and public works are natural starting points. Manufacturing, warehouses, agriculture and oilfield services offer additional opportunities, including indoor heat exposure. The initial focus should follow existing relationships, accessible pilot sites and repeat purchasing potential—not an attempt to serve every industry immediately.

6.4 million

U.S. construction and extraction occupation jobs, May 2025. [6]

36 million

Approximate number of workers OSHA estimated its proposed federal heat rule would protect. [2]

These figures establish scale, not a count of likely customers. They overlap, include different populations and should not be added together. Roofing and paving are also subsets of broader construction activity. The serviceable market must be narrowed by exposure, location, purchasing practices and product suitability.

Demand already exists; the thesis need not wait for a new rule.

As of this review, OSHA's federal heat-specific rule remains proposed. California already has indoor and outdoor heat standards. Employer heat programs also address water access, rest, shade or cooling areas, training and acclimatization. Hydration products and personal cooling may support these programs; buying them does not by itself establish compliance. [1,3–5]

What commercial scale could look like

WORKERS SUPPLIED	ANNUAL PURCHASE VALUE*
20,000	$3.6 million
100,000	$18 million
500,000	$90 million

*Illustrative employer consumables spending: workers supplied × 120 purchasing days × $1.50 per worker-day. These are assumptions, not a forecast, measured TAM or proposed price. The figures exclude equipment and wearables; supplier net revenue would differ with channel margins and the parties' product shares.

Next sizing step: build a bottom-up U.S. TAM and reachable beachhead from occupational exposure, buyer interviews, usable workdays and actual budgets. The opportunity is large enough to merit validation without relying on the unverified claim that Sqwincher earns $700 million annually.

THE PRODUCT PROGRAM

One program. Clear product roles.

Begin with two powder flavors in one format and a validated neck-ring offer; expand as repeat demand supports it.

PRODUCT FAMILY	ROLE AND PROPOSED FORMAT	READINESS / PRIORITY
Everyday water	ICHOR 1.5 L bottles in clear-wrapped six-packs; a straightforward option for buyers needing plain water.	Existing product identity. Confirm current supply, landed price and pallet configuration.
Electrolyte powders	Caffeine-free core; individual sticks and a pouch for a final 5 U.S. gallons. Cooler yield: 80 × 8 oz cups.	Lead development priority. Validate formula, taste, mixing directions and labels.
Sports drinks	Proposed 700 mL bottles, clear protective sports cap with black nozzle, 24-pack trays.	Follow customer demand and co-packer quotes; compare delivered cost with powder.
Electrolyte freeze pops	Four familiar flavors in an assorted format; a distinct cooling-break occasion.	Develop with a qualified manufacturer. Confirm pack size, storage, freezing and site freezer access.
ShiftCool Neck	Workforce adaptation of Rituo's reusable gel neck ring; optional movable reflective bands.	Existing neck-ring foundation. Validate the workforce configuration and its instructions. [7]
ShiftCool Cuff / headwear	Cuffs as a pair; later cooling headbands and headwraps with sweat-management fabrics.	Development concepts. Prototype, fit and thermal testing before launch.

A familiar range workers can recognize quickly.

Orange, lemon-lime, blue raspberry and fruit punch form the proposed flavor system. Color-led naming and nostalgic freeze-pop styling can make the range approachable; field taste tests should determine the final mix. Keep the base powder simple and caffeine-free. A separate morning energy product can follow later if customers want it.

Equipment and replenishment complete the offer: five-gallon coolers, individual cups, appropriate storage and a simple reorder process. The cooler incentive should be earned through order economics. Mixed pallets are a useful merchandising concept, subject to actual case dimensions, weights and a safe, workable packing plan.

Brand architecture: Rituo leads wearables; ICHOR leads water and bottled sports drinks. The balanced **rituo × ICHOR** identity is the current placeholder for powders, pops and shared cases/trays. Final use requires agreement between the parties.

CUSTOMERS AND ROUTE TO MARKET

Win the crew. Earn the account.

The buyer needs confidence in supply, cost and fit with the employer's existing heat program.

Start direct, with a clear owner at each customer.

Use ICHOR's contractor outreach and the partners' relationships to recruit a small group of pilot accounts. Safety or EHS managers can assess suitability; procurement evaluates terms and vendor requirements; site supervisors influence use and replenishment; workers determine acceptance. A successful program needs all four perspectives. Offer a simple quote, approved product list and a named service contact.

Turn field evidence into distributor demand.

After repeat orders demonstrate demand, approach safety-supply, construction-supply and industrial distributors. Give them a concise assortment, case and pallet specifications, margin structure, lead times and an uncomplicated reorder process. Distributors can provide reach and existing purchasing access; the offer must leave sufficient economics for them and for both brands.

Unions can help open the conversation.

Union locals, apprenticeship centers, labor-management safety funds and signatory contractor associations are potential education and pilot partners. Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America already operates heat-related outreach to locals and signatory contractors. This supports the channel logic, not an endorsement or purchase commitment. The employer or contractor may still control purchasing. Union workers are part of the same workforce market, not additional TAM. [12]

The competitive standard is already high.

EXISTING ALTERNATIVE	WHAT THE PROGRAM MUST PROVE
Sqwincher Industrial hydration across powders, drinks and freezer pops. [8,9]	Competitive delivered value, acceptable taste, dependable supply and a reason to switch or add a second supplier.
Gatorade and familiar sports brands Established drink and powder choices. [10]	Comparable worker appeal with a purchasing format and service model suited to the account.
Cooling specialists such as Ergodyne Broad cooling product assortments. [11]	Credible product design, practical fit, clear instructions and workforce-specific validation.

The opportunity is execution. A broad assortment alone is not unique. The strongest proposition is a thoughtfully selected range, recognizable brands, fast replenishment and evidence that the program works operationally at the customer's sites. Paid reorders are the clearest early signal.

ECONOMICS AND PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

Build repeat revenue with discipline.

A commercial alliance can test the opportunity before either party commits to a broader equity arrangement.

Measure contribution after the product reaches the buyer.

Compare formats using cost per prepared serving and per worker-day, including freight, warehousing, fulfillment, channel margin, spoilage, samples and equipment allowances. Powder may offer a shipping advantage over finished beverages, but water quality, mixing, cleaning and labor matter at the site. Bottled products offer convenience. Freezer pops and wearables require a workable freezing or recharging routine. Actual quotes and pilot use should determine the mix.

Make incentives pay for themselves.

Set cooler or starter-kit allowances against forecast order contribution and confirm payback through paid reorders. Large minimum orders, excess inventory and free equipment can create apparent growth without attractive cash returns.

Recommended starting structure

WORKSTREAM	PROPOSED PRINCIPLE
Responsibilities	ICHOR leads beverage sourcing and product coordination; Rituo leads wearable development. Assign quality, fulfillment and account-service owners for each SKU.
Commercial model	Use wholesale economics when one party buys and resells; use a defined referral or sales commission when it originates business fulfilled by the other. Apply reciprocal logic and avoid double compensation.
Brands and IP	Each party retains its existing brands and IP. Document ownership or licensed access to new formulas, designs, tooling and artwork; supplier rights must be checked separately.
Accounts and exclusivity	Define introduced accounts, existing-account exclusions, reorder rights and channel scope. Any exclusivity should be narrow, time-limited and tied to paid purchase commitments and service obligations.
Cash and operating risk	Agree deposits, inventory ownership, payment terms, returns, recalls, insurance and allocation of unsold stock. Fund noncancelable production with approved orders or committed capital.

Keep procurement simple without obscuring responsibility. A coordinated quote and consolidated ordering experience can be valuable, but a single purchase order should be promised only when the seller-of-record, billing and fulfillment process can support it. Start with an agreed pilot scope; revisit deeper integration or equity after proven demand and clearly valued contributions.

EXECUTION AND EXPANSION

A practical path to the 2027 season.

Advance product readiness now, then let evidence determine how quickly the range expands.

STAGE	PRIORITY ACTIONS AND DECISION
1. Commercial and product definition Begin now	Align the partners on roles, provisional branding and a narrow launch assortment. Obtain written manufacturing quotes, minimums, lead times and specifications. Interview 10–15 target buyers to verify budgets, current suppliers and procurement requirements.
2. Readiness and field trial Before commercial scale	Finalize labels, quality procedures and instructions. Use 2–3 pilot sites with roughly 25–50 participants each, targeting about 20 working days of operational learning. Include different tasks and environmental conditions where practical.
3. Paid pilot and expansion 90-day commercial review	The selling-pilot clock starts when products are available. Track paid orders, replenishment and contribution. Add sites and a distributor partner only after the supply and service model performs reliably.

Use a concise scorecard.

Track worker preference, actual consumption, waste, cooling comfort and fit, replenishment frequency, supervisor workload, quality issues, repeat paid orders, delivered contribution and days to cash. Compare against the site's current purchasing approach. A small field trial can test acceptance and operations; it cannot establish a reduction in heat illness or prove productivity gains.

Validate the promises that matter.

Confirm food safety, shelf life, nutritional labels and formula consistency. For wearables, test skin-contact temperatures, cold flexibility, leakage, durability, fit and compatibility with the PPE used at each site. Reflective trim is a proposed feature, not a certification. Confirm cooler sanitation, charging/freezer capacity and separate handling of beverages and used wearables. Product-specific evidence must support performance claims. [14]

Expand geographically in stages.

Prove the U.S. model first. Canada and Mexico are logical next markets once labeling, import requirements, local supply and channel partners are addressed. Canada's own occupational heat guidance reinforces the relevance of the use case. Selective international licensing or distribution can follow; it should not be added to the initial sales forecast without local validation. [13]

The recommendation

Proceed with a focused joint development and pilot plan. There is a credible path from a useful crew-level offer to recurring employer and distributor accounts. Prioritize dependable products, worker acceptance and profitable replenishment—the foundations that can turn an attractive concept into a durable business.

EVIDENCE AND PLANNING NOTES

Sources and basis.

Primary sources reviewed November 6, 2026. Numbered references support the factual context; commercial recommendations are planning judgments.

01 OSHA — Heat injury and illness prevention rulemaking
Federal heat-specific rule remains described as proposed; hearing and comment history.

02 U.S. Department of Labor — Proposed heat rule, August 30, 2024
Approximately 36 million workers potentially covered if finalized; not an addressable-customer count.

03 Cal/OSHA — Heat Illness Prevention
Existing California indoor and outdoor heat requirements.

04 CDC / NIOSH — Workplace Recommendations
Hydration, acclimatization, training and other heat-program measures.

05 OSHA — Water. Rest. Shade.
Water access and additional electrolyte-containing fluids for longer heat exposure.

06 BLS — Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2025
Released May 15, 2026; 6.4 million construction and extraction occupation jobs.

07 Rituo Brands — POSTGAME ICE
Existing reusable gel neck-ring product; manufacturer information, not independent workforce validation.

08 Sqwincher — Product range
Current hydration formats and assortment.

09 Sqwincher — Sqweeze Pops
Regular and zero-sugar freezer-pop offerings.

10 Gatorade — Hydration powders
Existing branded powder alternatives.

11 Ergodyne — Cooling technology and products
Existing workforce cooling assortment.

12 LHSFNA — Protecting Workers from Dangerous Heat
Evidence of outreach to locals and signatory contractors; used for channel context only.

13 CCOHS — Hot Environments: Assessment and Control Measures
Canadian occupational heat-management context.

14 CDC / NIOSH — PPE and Personal Cooling Systems
Cooling-system selection and practical limitations; not validation of proposed products.

Internal basis. Current ICHOR–Rituo workforce program, powder sheet, product concepts and founder discussions in this project. Proposed names, packaging, formulations and partnership terms are not final. Existing-product descriptions do not establish equivalent performance for new formats.

Market methodology. Revenue illustrations are simple worker × purchasing-day × daily-spend scenarios. They are not third-party market estimates, forecasts or company commitments. A validated TAM/SAM, final pricing and an account-level operating model remain next-stage work.