

# Distributor News

March 2013

## FISA Planning Meeting Discusses Industry Trends

The 2013 FISA Long Range Planning Meeting was held February 7-9 in Jupiter Beach, Florida. Participants included the Board of Directors and invited guests, Chris LoPresti of Andron Stainless and Chad Dykstra of Sani-Matic. At the beginning of the meeting, the group discussed factors impacting the business climate, particularly trends in food, beverage, and pharmaceuticals. The following trends were identified as impacting the marketplace:

- Beverage spending is on the rise in growth countries including South America and Asia
- End user requirements for communication is increasing in a variety of areas including:
  - Protocol
  - Efficiency measurements pharma impact
  - Documentation Paper Audits
  - Safety reporting for installation
- There is a greater need for higher precision controls/drives/motors in the industry
- Metal detection equipment in pharma growing
- Product development is strong, thereby potentially requiring new plants— opportunities exist
- The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will impact industry particularly implementation in cleaning processes
- Product recovery presents opportunities

Demographic challenges will exist when a

large number of dairy factory workers will retire over the next few years; finding young workers interested in factory work will present challenges as the product knowledge and tool sets will be lost with the retiring generation. Engaging and educating the next generation will require attention.

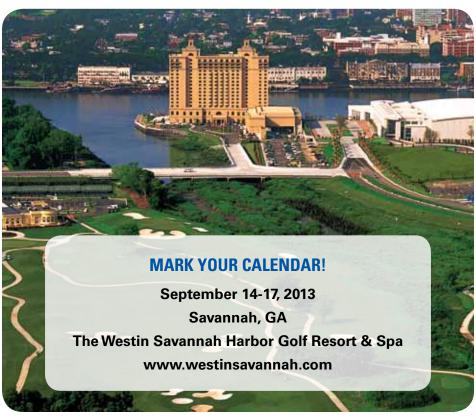
Participants also discussed overall changes in the industries served by FISA members and made the following observations:

 End-User driven third party issuance of purchase orders increases procurement tracking, work and costs for distributors

- Changing terms and condition for payment and warranties need to be watched
- The fluid milk industry is declining
- IT issues are increasing
- Dramatic price increases have been observed

In the 2013 Membership Survey conducted in January, the majority of respondents thought that breweries, particularly micro and craft breweries, offered growth potential for this year as well as the beverage industry with alternative dairy and protein fortified drinks.

### 2013 FISA Annual Conference



1



FISA is an association composed of distributors and manufacturer members who share a commitment to value-added distribution in serving high purity processing industries. FISA's mission is to help its members improve performance and customer value.

#### 2012 - 2013 FISA Board of Directors

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#### **Bob Morava**

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#### Kevin O'Donnell

Top Line Process Equipment Co.

#### Jason Ryan

Ryan PureServe Systems

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#### Wallace Wittkoff

Pump Solutions Group

#### **FISA Address:**

1207 Sunset Drive Greensboro, NC 27408 Phone 336-274-6311 Fax 336-691-1839 www.fisanet.org

Stella L. Jones
Executive Director
Email: stella@fisanet.org

## From the President



Dear FISA members,

Your Board of Directors and a few industry advisors just completed the winter planning meeting. This year's planning meeting was extremely productive which in turn is going to lead to

a tremendous fall conference.

The response to the last member survey was very helpful and enlightening for the board. 60% of the distributors and 33% of the manufacturers participated. A few highlights include:

- Both distributors and manufacturers agreed that the beverage industry is the largest growth area. Micro breweries, craft breweries and the distilled spirits were mentioned several times as the drivers to this growth.
- Distributors listed pharmaceutical as the next growth area.
- Dairy was second on the manufacturers list.
- The majority of the members had not used the Virtual Human Resource (HR) Department and the main reason for not using it was the members did not know it existed.
- 71% of the distributors said it would be helpful to have industry data to use for benchmarking.
- A large percentage responded that they were using Linked In for professional and personal use.

The survey results, evaluations from the conference last fall and other information led to great discussions and actions by the board.

The Virtual HR Department obviously needs to be promoted. It is a benefit that FISA provides all members and is available in the "members only" section of the website. Nancy Combs, a former FISA speaker and human resource consultant, linked her information to our site. This information includes job descriptions, applications, required employment posters and many other useful tools. A great portion of this information is free. Nancy also will provide 30 minutes of free consultation to each member company. To find this information go to the "members only" section and the password is **addvalue**.

Many of you responded that it would be help-ful to compare your company to your peers in the industry. In order to assist with this request, we will have Al Bates address the fall conference and share what he learned when he studied our industry before and what services we can use in the future. He will also give us ideas of what we can do to increase our profits in the future.

Special thanks go to Jason Ryan who is taking the lead to develop a "Linked In Group" for FISA. This will lead to greater communications and discussions among the members.

Your surveys also gave direction for the choice of topics for the fall conference. With the help of Trish Lilly, our facilitator for the Planning Meeting, and Stella Jones, our Executive Director, we identified possible speakers and you will hear more about this soon.

A special thanks to Chad Dykstra, Sani-Matic and Chris LoPresti, Andron Stainless, our two guests, for taking time and offering valuable input during our meeting. Also thank you to Stella Jones and Trish Lilly for organizing and guiding us through the meeting.

The following goals for the organization were reaffirmed:

- 1) Grow the Association
- 2) Strengthen Distributor/Manufacturer Relationship
- 3) Explore and Expand Membership Benefits
- 4) Promote FISA Members as the Chanel of Choice

Each board member accepted an assignment associated with the above goals. Thanks in advance to the board for your work on these goals.

Hopefully 2013 is starting off to be a successful year for you. Please mark your calendars for our Annual Conference September 14 - 17 and join us in Savannah, GA.

Thanks,

David

David

# FISA Goes Social: Linked in

FISA has joined the growing trend in Social media. In February, a LinkedIn group was created in an effort to keep members connected in between the annual conferences. Throughout the year we will be posting pertinent information about topics that affect our industry. All active member companies and their employees may join; in addition we will be adding conference speakers to the group where they can share additional insight throughout the year.



(L to R) Bob Morava, Stuart W. Johnson & Co., and Jason Ryan, PureServe Systems

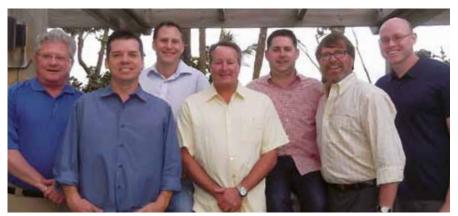
Popular conference topics on legislative and economic matters will be addressed on a quarterly basis. LinkedIn provides a great platform where these topics and others can be discussed among the group. Any member can post topics and discussions, and we encourage members to get involved and participate in discussions.

Joining is easy. Visit www.LinkedIn.com and search for FISA – Distributors Serving Sanitary Processing, send a request to join, once you are approved you can read and participate in discussions. In order to join, you must have your own LinkedIn account.

In addition to LinkedIn, the FISA webpage is in the process of getting a complete makeover. By the end of April there should be a whole new look, including details about the upcoming conference in Savannah.



(L to R) Andrew Hider, Anderson Instrument Company, Inc., David Brink, M.G. Newell Corporation, Kevin O'Donnell, Topline Process Equipment Company.



(L to R) Jim Banks, Pentair Sudmo, Joe Allman, Flowtrend, Inc., Andrew Hider, Anderson Instrument Company, Inc., Chad Sprinkman, Quality Tank Solutions, Jason Ryan PureServe Systems, Inc, Rob Clark, Perrigo, Inc., Jeff Heerema, Heerema Company

#### **CHECKING THE PULSE**

In January of 2013, FISA conducted its electronic Member Survey. The return rate was 60% for Distributors and 33% for Manufacturers. Below is a summary of the results:

#### DISTRIBUTORS MANUFACTURERS

1. Now that the fiscal cliff legislation has been passed, how do you feel about the economy for 2013?

More Optimistic	19.4%	13.6%
Less Optimistic	22.6%	22.7%
No Change	58.1%	63.6%

2. Do buying groups affect your business?

Yes	64.5%	38.1%
No	32.3%	38.1%
Don't Know	3.2%	23.8%

3. If buying groups are affecting your business, what is the impact?

Gaining Popularity	32.1%	13.3%
Less Popular	14.3%	13.3%
Don't Know	3.3%	73.3%

4. What is your opinion of reverse auctions?

More active	19.4%	4.5%
Less Active	48.4%	59.1%
Don't Know	32.3%	36.4%

5. Does your company offer Customers the ability to order online?

Yes	12.9%
No	87 1%

6. Does your company offer Distributors the ability to order online?

Yes	9.1%
No	90.9%

7. Are you interested in learning more about how to transact business on your web site?

Yes	53.6%	45%
No	46.4%	55%



(L to R) Chris LoPresti, Andron Stainless Company, and Chad Dykstra, Sani-Matic

# Profit Improvement Report

## **Bending the Payroll Cost Curve**

By Dr. Albert D. Bates
President, Profit Planning Group



#### **About the Author:**

Dr. Albert D. Bates is founder and president of Profit Planning Group. His latest book, Triple Your Profit!, is available at: www.tripleyourprofitbook.com, as well as Amazon and Barnes & Noble. It includes Excel templates for understanding and building the sales to payroll wedge discussed here.

The phrase "bending the cost curve" is widely used today, largely with regard to health care. That is, as a society there is a need to slow the growth of the cost of providing health-care services. Bending the cost curve is also a useful concept for distributors, but it needs to be expanded.

Distributors, such as FISA members, need to think in terms of bending the entire payroll cost curve, not just the health-care component. Simply put, the poor management of payroll costs is second only to inadequate gross margin as a barrier to achieving desired levels of profitability.

At the same time, payroll is not just an expense item, like, say utilities. Payroll costs represent the employees who provide

the services that allow the firm to generate adequate sales. Slashing and burning with regard to payroll is, at best, a counterproductive activity. The real task is to lower payroll costs relative to sales without diminishing any aspect of customer service.

This report examines the nature of the payroll challenge. It will do so from two important perspectives:

The Long-Term Payroll Challenge—A discussion of the experience of distributors, including FISA members, in controlling payroll over time.

**Actually Bending the Curve**—Some specific suggestions for improving payroll performance while maintaining employee esprit de corps.

# Exhibit 1 The Impact of Various Sales and Payroll Growth Scenarios For An Illustrative Distributor

			5% Sales Growth	
	Current	5% Payroll	3% Payroll	7% Payroll
Income Statement\$	Results	Growth	Growth	Growth
Net Sales	\$10,000,000	10,500,000	\$10,500,000	10,500,000
Cost of Goods Sold	7,500,000	<u>7,875,000</u>	7,875,000	<u>7,875,000</u>
Gross Margin	2,500,000	2,625,000	2,625,000	2,625,000
Payroll and Fringe Benefits	1,500,000	1,575,000	1,545,000	1,605,000
All Other Expenses	<u>750,000</u>	<u>787,500</u>	787,500	<u>787,500</u>
Total Expenses	2,250,000	<u>2,362,500</u>	2,332,500	2,392,500
Profit Before Taxes	\$250,000	\$262,500	\$292,500	232,500
Income Statement%				
Net Sales	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Cost of Goods Sold	<u>75.0</u>	<u>75.0</u>	<u>75.0</u>	<u>75.0</u>
Gross Margin	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Payroll and Fringe Benefits	15.0	15.0	14.7	15.3
All Other Expenses	7.5	<u>7.5</u>	<u>7.5</u>	<u>7.5</u>
Total Expenses	22.5	22.5	22.2	22.8
Profit Before Taxes	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.2
Change in Profit%		5.0	17.0	-7.0

# The Long-Term Payroll Challenge

The central reality in distribution is that over time, payroll has remained an almost constant percent of sales. The Profit Planning Group has a financial data base of more than fifty lines of trade in distribution. For many of those associations, information goes back twenty to thirty years.

Adjusting for economic conditions, payroll costs are virtually unchanged from twenty years ago. That is, in a moderate-growth period twenty years ago, payroll was about the same percent of revenue as it is in a moderate-growth period today. FISA members are not exempt from this reality.

There are three factors at work to undermine the inability of firms to lower payroll as a percent of sales: Workload Growth, Productivity Reliance, and Sales-Based Planning. Each of these has its own implications.

Workload Growth—As firms continually increase their sales, there is a need for more warehouse employees, more drivers, more credit analysts and the like. This is a benign inevitability that offers little potential for meaningful cost control.

**Productivity Reliance**—Distributors have steadily increased productivity, especially on the operations side of their businesses. Indeed, key productivity measures, such as sales per employee have experienced impressive growth.

The reality is that productivity improvements are a necessary, but not totally sufficient, means of controlling payroll costs. If investments in technology are not made, payroll costs will probably rise as a percent of sales. At the same time, improved productivity does not translate into lower payroll costs relative to sales. Expansions of the services provided seem to offset productivity gains.

**Sales-Based Planning**—The real culprit is the planning dynamic pervasive throughout the economy that tends to relate sales growth and payroll growth. Part of this is a

tendency to pay employees for breathing. As long as employees continue to breathe each year, they continue to receive pay increases.

The most serious aspect of the philosophy of sales-based planning is that management does not have realistic parameters for actually improving payroll performance. Without them, it seems inevitable that the no-improvement trend of the past will continue in perpetuity. A new planning perspective is essential.

### **Actually Bending the Curve**

The fundamental necessity in bending the curve is that sales must grow faster than the payroll expenses required to generate those sales. Payroll does not just include wages alone; sales must increase faster than fully-loaded payroll expenses—including all salaries, commissions, bonuses, social costs (Medicare and FICA) as well as health insurance and retirement, usually a 401(k) program.

The concept of increasing sales faster than payroll is what is commonly called a sales to payroll wedge. Astute readers will remember that the author has hounded them on this concept before. Since payroll costs continue to rise in tandem with sales, the author is dedicated to hounding once again.

Exhibit 1 demonstrates the impact of the sales to payroll wedge on an illustrative distributor. As can be seen, the firm generates \$10,000,000 in sales, operates on a gross margin of 25.0% of sales and produces a bottom line profit of 2.5% of sales or \$250,000.

Three different scenarios are presented in the exhibit. They all involve sales growth of 5.0%. This modest growth rate was chosen specifically to demonstrate that rapid growth is not needed to drive higher profit. What is essential is payroll control in relationship to that sales growth.

The first scenario has payroll increasing at the same 5.0% level as sales growth. In essence, this is a microcosm of what has happened among FISA members over time.

Some years payroll grows faster than sales, other years the situation is reversed. Over time the two factors move forward together. Profit is up 5.0%.

The second scenario examines the impact of achieving a 2.0% sales to payroll wedge. Specifically, payroll increased by 3.0% while sales grew by 5.0%. The impact of a small one-year delta is dramatic. Profit is increased by 17.0%. Further, profit is now 2.8% of sales.

The last scenario presents the impact of a negative sales to payroll wedge. In this instance, payroll grew by 7.0% in conjunction with 5.0% sales growth. As a result, profit actually fell by 7.0%. In short, even modest changes in the size of the sales to payroll wedge produces large changes in profit levels.

The entire discussion has focused on planning for a positive sales to payroll wedge. It employed a 2.0% delta, which is a realistic planning goal. However, planning for improved results and generating them are two different things.

The key in actually producing a positive sales to payroll wedge continues to be a careful analysis of transaction economics. That is, the same level of sales volume can produce very different profit levels, depending upon the amount of work required in each transaction.

Two key factors have always been important in transaction analysis. The first is the number of line items sold per transaction. The second is the average line value. A system that measures these factors and then uses them in planning can go a long way towards actually producing a positive sales to payroll wedge.

### **Moving Forward**

Sales growth must be maintained at a level that allows the firm to produce a sales to payroll wedge of something in the 2.0% range. With such a delta, the long-term challenge with payroll control can finally be overcome. With even modest sales growth, higher profits will become a reality.

# Member News & Views

The who, what, where, when and whys of the FISA membership.

#### **How to Submit News**

The Distributor News is published quarterly and the deadline for the next issue is June 1, 2013. Due to space limitations, we cannot print specific product information, but personnel changes, changes of address, expansions or other industry news is always of interest.

If you have a question, please call 336-274-6311.

Fax information to FISA at 336-691-1839 or mail to FISA at 1207 Sunset Drive, Greensboro, NC 27408.

Email: stella@fisanet.org

#### United Industries, Inc.

United Industries, Inc. has successfully completed the ASME BPE certification audit and was presented with ASME BPE certificate #101 at the ASME BioProcessing



Greg Sturicz receiving award

Equipment Standards (BPE) Meeting on January 15, 2013 in Puerto Rico. United Industries, Inc. is the first manufacturer in the world to be audited and certified and has done so adhering to the most current 2012 ASME BPE standards. United Industries, Inc. has been in business for more than 75 years and is a manufacturer of laser welded stainless steel tubing for the high purity and sanitary processing industries. United Industries' President, Greg Sturicz said of the recent certification "We are very proud of this achievement and it reflects the dedication of our organization and the strong commitment that we, as a company have made to the ASME BPE Standards." For more information: www. unitedindustries.com.

#### W.M. Sprinkman Corporation

W. M. Sprinkman Corporation announces the addition of four new employees. Brian Sprinkman says, "We have added two new people to our outside sales force. Dan Urban will be managing the Northern Illinois and Wisconsin territory and Steve Burk will be taking care of Southern Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. Both have hit the ground running and in an effort to support our outside team, we have hired Susan Ritchie primarily as an addition to our inside sales team, but also to assist with corporate purchas-





but not Susan Ritchie

least, to meet the increased demand, we have added to our drafting team at our tank manufacturing facility by adding **Janel Chipman**."



Dover's Pump Solutions
Group has recently established global business segments to support and further pursue key markets. **Andrew Usuki** has been named V.P.
Global Segment Marketing to lead the group. **Wallace Wittkoff**, a member of the
FISA Board of Directors, has been promoted to Director,
Global Segment Marketing for the Hygienic segment to



Andrew Usuki



Wallace Wittkoff

pursue initiatives worldwide in this respective area. **David Kirk**, also a frequent FISA confer-



David Kirk

ence attendee for PSG, is now responsible as Hygienic Market Manager for the Americas who supports PSG distributors with assistance of the Regional Sales Management group.

#### **VNE Corporation**

VNE Corporation has had multiple new hires and a promotion from their inside ranks. VNE continues to grow in all sectors they serve.



Mike Flitcroft

Mike Flitcroft was recently promoted from within VNE to Regional Sales Manager. Mike has been with VNE since February 1998 and was most recently an Inside Customer Service Repre-

sentative. In his new role as RSM he will be responsible for developing and increasing sales revenues to meet assigned sales goals in his territory. Mike will do product orientation and training for existing and new distributors. Mike will report directly to **Frank "Chip" Manning**, Sales Director of VNE Corporation. **John** 



John Punzel

**Punzel** accepted the position of VNE Plant Manager. His responsibilities at VNE will be to manage all shop activities and personnel, production planning and complete facilities management. John

will join the VNE management team and report directly to Dan Larsen, CEO of VNE.

Continued on page 8...



Janel Chipman

## YRC Freight Works for You

FREIGHT

Thank goodness it's Friday and YRC Freight is working on weekends!

When you use YRC Freight Time-CriticalTM service, you can relax and enjoy your weekend knowing that your Friday shipment will arrive on Monday.

Unlike most carriers, YRC Freight Time-Critical Service counts Saturday and Sunday as service days. In fact, YRC Freight provides Friday-to-Monday service on 80% of Time-Critical lanes, and Thursday-to-Monday service on 95% coast to coast:

- No one is faster on Friday pickups than YRC Freight Time-Critical.
- It's like getting air freight service at a fraction of the cost.
- Also, there's no additional charge for weekend transit. It's automatically included when you use YRC Freight Time-Critical service.
- For last-minute, emergency shipments,

you'll save dollars with Time-Critical. None of those nasty air or rush charges.

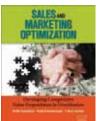
> Remember, Time-Critical shipments continue to move

over the weekend. To engage a Fridayto-Monday Time-Critical shipment, take the following steps or click here for more detailed information.

- First, check your transit map or our service calculator to ensure we can meet the delivery date.
- Then, select Time-Critical by 5 pm on any of our quote-free options and provide Monday's delivery date.
- Finally, schedule a pickup for Friday and your shipment is on its way.

For more information, contact your dedicated YRC Freight specialist at 800.647.3061 or associations@yrcw.com. As a FISA member, you can receive significant savings with YRC Freight. Simply enroll online at enrollhere.net or contact us by phone or email.

New Sales and Marketing Optimization: Developing Competitive Value Propositions in Distribution is a first-of-its-kind, best practices study that focuses on aligning customer needs, sales



force priorities, and wholesaler-distributor objectives to maximize value creation. This study speaks to the critical business issues all wholesaler-distributors face in leading and growing their organizations.

- 30 best practices from actual wholesaler-
- 60 action steps that your firm can implement immediately
- 122 examples from wholesaler-distributors across many lines of trade!

To order this book, go to www.naw.org.

### Sign Up Now!

FISA is a member of the Association Education Alliance (AEA) which is a group of leading distributor associations who together offer educational programs and webinars. A Sales Professional Training Camp is coming up April 2-4, 2013 Dayton, Ohio

This outstanding training seminar will be conducted by Don Buttrey, President of Sales Professional Training, Inc. He is a no-nonsense, powerful teacher who relates sales skills so effectively that both rookie and veteran respond immediately and never get bored.

Space is limited to 35 attendees. If you have questions, can call Don at 937-427-1717 or email him at donbuttrey@salesprofessionaltraing.com.

To register, email: plilly@thompsonmanagement.com

> Sales Professional **Training CAMP** April 2-4, 2013 Dayton, Ohio

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Seminar includes 2-1/2 days of training materials, a complete workbinder, a CD of course tools, all breaks and lunches during the seminar. Travel and lodging not included, but a special hotel rate (\$94.95) has been negotiated for you.

## Sign up for NAW SmartBrief

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Summaries of what matters to you, written by expert editors to save you time and keep you informed and prepared.

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Sales and Marketing Optimization is jampacked with:

#### News & Views ... continued from page 6



Lee Brittain-Curry



Penny Krehoff



Dave Pleyte

Lee Brittain-Curry and **Penny Krehoff** recently accepted the position of Customer Service Representative for VNE. Lee has strong CSR experience coming from Jamco, Electrol Specialties and Waukesha Cherry Burrell. Penny most recently came from Ferguson Enterprises with strong piping and CSR experience. Both Lee and Penny will report to Vicki Gridley, VNE Customer Service Manager. **Dave** Pleyte recently took the position of Polisher, fabrication shop.

Dave joins VNE from Raptor Enterprises and previously was with GM and RathGibson Tube. Dave will report directly to John Punzel, VNE Plant Manager. Kacie Harrier and Dawn Cherry have accepted warehouse positions in the growing inventory control and order picking areas. Kacie most recently came from John



Kacie Harrier



Dawn Cherry

Deere where she picked and packed as well as did quality audits. Dawn comes to VNE from Wileman Publishing and Seneca Foods working in warehouse and customer service areas. Both Kacie and Dawn will report to **Sandi Lohmeier**, Warehouse and Quality Assurance Manager.

## **Mark Your Calendar**

March 10-14, 2013 UID in Indianapolis

April 2-4, 2013
Sales Professional
Training Camp

**July 1, 2013** Renew FISA Membership

September 14-17, 2013
FISA Annual Conference
The Westin Savannah Harbor
Golf Resort & Spa

#### **NOTE:**

Remember to update your company information. Go to www.fisanet.org and look under the Membership Listing. Email changes to stella@fisanet.org.



## Distributor **News**

1207 Sunset Drive Greensboro, NC 27408