

Survey of Jan/San Distributors Looks at Business Concerns



More than 100 jan/san distributors throughout the United States completed an online survey regarding a variety of issues affecting their businesses and the cleaning industry.

Among some of the responses noted, more than 50 percent of the distributors believe “pricing pressures” are their number one business concern today followed by 48 percent troubled by the growing influence and competition from national distributors competing in their cities and towns.

Among some of the other findings:

- To address the business challenges of the future, 56 percent of the distributors indicated this could best be accomplished by concentrating on “niche” markets.
- In another question, 56 percent of the respondents reported that providing “value added” services to end customers was one of the most effective ways for local distributors to compete against larger and national distributors.
- Forty-four percent believe jansan buying groups “will become increasingly important” for distributors as another way to meet the marketing challenges of the future.

Optimism Found

“Although the survey indicated many distributors have growing concerns about how well they will be able to compete against growing competition, overall they seemed optimistic about the future,” says Mike Nelson, vice president of marketing for Pro-Link, a jansan-focused marketing and buying group based in Canton, Massachusetts. “In fact, nearly 85 percent predict 2007 will be as good as or better than 2006.”

Regarding other issues, one question asked the distributors to compare foreign made jansan equipment with products made by U.S. manufacturers. Sixty-five percent indicated that these machines “are comparable” to American made products. And when asked where end customers should purchase accessories for their cleaning equipment, fully 80 percent of the respondents reported that end customers should buy vacuum cleaner bags, hoses, and related-equipment parts directly from distributors and not from manufacturers.



“What I thought was also significant is that these distributors are aware of the business challenges ahead and are taking steps to address them,” says Nelson. “Finding niche markets, providing more end customer services, and joining buying groups are all powerful ways to meet these challenges and succeed in the future.”

The online survey, conducted by Chicago’s AlturaSolutions Communications e-Poll, delivered approximately 1,000 e-mail invitations in late February to distributors asking them to take the survey. It has a confidence rating of 95 percent, indicating that even if more respondents took the survey it is believed the responses would be about the same, plus or minus 5 percent.

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