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Distributors Speak Out on Buying Groups

January 9, 2007

94 percent of jansan distributors are aware of buying groups in the professional cleaning industry, according to an online survey conducted December 15–22, 2006, by PRO-LINK, a jansan-focused marketing and buying group based in Canton, MA.

A buying group is a consortium of distributors. Such groups exist in a variety of industries, including paper, ink, printing, hospitality, furniture, food, and restaurant. There are about five buying groups catering to the jansan industry in the United States today.

The survey was sponsored by PRO-LINK and was conducted by AlturaSolutions Communications, Inc., using an online survey service. Approximately 700 distributors were asked to participate.

A PRO-LINK press release regarding the survey stated that 60 percent of respondents said they have joined or have considered joining a buying group. When asked why they would join a buying group, the key responses were:

- For better pricing of products and equipment—25 percent
- For advice and help—6.5 percent
- To secure better products—.5 percent
- To be more competitive—12.5 percent
- All of the above—nearly 40 percent

Why Not Join?

"Of those distributors that don't belong to a group but indicated they know of other distributors who do belong to buying groups, more than 64 percent say those distributors have 'benefited' or are 'overall satisfied' with their membership," Mike Nelson, vice president of marketing for PRO-LINK, said in the release. "However, some of the respondents also indicated why they would not join a buying group."

Those responses included:

- Prefer my independence—36 percent
- Do not feel they have enough benefits—9 percent

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- Do not believe I need one—45 percent
- Joined one and did not like it—9 percent

About PRO-LINK

Founded in 1984 and based in Canton, MA, PRO-LINK is a national full-service janitorial supply, marketing, and buying organization with more than 70 members and 100 distribution points throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.prolinkhq.com or call 800-74-LINKS.

For more information on the survey, contact rkravitz@rcn.com.

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