

# Survey Reveals Thoughts on Jan/San Buying Groups

An online survey conducted December 15–22, 2006, finds that nearly all—94 percent—jan/san distributors responding are aware of buying groups in the professional cleaning industry.

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 jan/san 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, members of ISSA, were asked to participate, with more than 1 in 10 responding.

According to the survey, 60 percent say they have joined or have considered joining a buying group. When asked why they would join a buying group, these were the key responses:

- For “better pricing” of products and equipment, 25 percent
- For “advice and help,” 6.5 percent
- To secure “better products,” 6.5 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,” says Mike Nelson, Vice President of Marketing for Pro-Link. “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
- Do not believe I need one, 45 percent
- Joined one and did not like it, 9 percent



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“What this tells me is something I encounter often,” says Nelson. “Like most businesspeople, many jansan distributors are very independent. They like running their own ‘show’ as long as they can. However, the many changes in our industry have made many look for alternative ways to be both independent and still part of an association of distributors, giving them some form of business advantage in their market.”