



“The professional network for fluid power, automation and motion technology providers dedicated to significantly enhancing member and channel performance by delivering indispensable networking, education and success strategies.”



A Message from FPDA President Steve Schwasnick, Western Integrated Technologies, Inc. Bellevue, Washington

“If You Are Not Tracking, You Have No Idea Where You Are Going!”

I'm a huge proponent of benchmarking. In fact, the Benchmarking Committee was the first FPDA Committee that I participated on (Thanks Mr. Thornton!) Benchmarking and monthly tracking are so critical to our success. That is why my company participates in FPDA's variety of benchmarking offerings:

- The Annual Profit Report
- The Monthly Economic Indicators Report provided by Cleveland Research
- The Monthly Snapshot Survey propelled by Activant
- The Bi-Annual Compensation Survey

More than any other association I belong to, FPDA provides me the tools I need to track my business performance and gives me guidance on areas that I need to improve. If you are not using these tools, I urge you to do so. Here's how I use them:

Annual Profit Report

This year, FPDA will open the report on March 15 and we plan to publish the report on June 15. Conducted by Profit Planning Group, your survey data is sent directly to PPG and does not go through FPDA so confidentiality is ensured. The information in this report provides answers to questions such as “Are the most successful firms in a down market placing more emphasis on gross margin firm and management or expense control?” In short, this report presents a wealth of financial and operating guidelines. It provides direct comparisons between

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INTRODUCING THE ALL NEW FPDA WEBSITE – VISIT WWW.FPDA.ORG TODAY!

A whole new look awaits visitors to the FPDA Website. This user-friendly site will give you all the latest information on FPDA activities and programs. With easy to follow icons (like the one for the Annual Network Summit), you will be able to find the information you need with just a simple click. Check it out today!



A Message from the FPDA President—Continued from cover page

your firm and other participating firms. This valuable information is, however, only available to firms that participate in the study. The more companies that participate, the more valuable the results, particularly for comparative purposes. I use all of the tools provided: the Profit Report, which is a financial and operating profile of the entire industry; the Profit Improvement Profile which is a confidential report sent directly to each participant which compares your firm with similar participating firms. For my annual planning, I used the HIGH PROFIT FPDA results as the baseline for my targets. I find the data valuable in my conversations with my bankers, vendors, and other key service providers. While most associations charge for participation in this survey, FPDA gives you this program as a member benefit – completely FREE!

Monthly Economic Indicators Report provided by Cleveland Research

Each month, I look forward to receiving the results of this Economic Indicators Report. An FPDA Index tracks fluid power activity. The report explores trends in sales, inventory, end markets, commodity pricing trends, and more. This report has been extremely valuable to me as I've navigated the choppy waters of the last recession. And, it's FREE to members!

Monthly Snapshot Survey

Each month, I compare our Sales, Orders, and Inventory with other FPDA distributors participating in the Monthly Snapshot Survey. This custom-designed web-based program allows me to run graphs showing my company's current numbers compared to what others in the industry are doing. All I do is enter three data points each month and the data provides me an accurate barometer for my business. Need a quick look at sales, orders and inventory? I can't stress enough the value of this program... and, it's FREE to members!

Bi-Annual Compensation Report

In order to attract and retain key employees, I am always studying how my firm's employee compensation package stacks up in the fluid power industry. The easiest way for me to do that is to evaluate my situation using the Employee Compensation Study conducted by Profit Planning Group every two years. This year, I participated in the 2010 survey and am able to compare my employee's salaries and benefits with not only the fluid power industry but approximately 2,500 firms in over 35 distribution lines of trade.

The results help me determine where my compensation plan stands not only within the fluid power industry but also compared with companies in other lines of distribution. Again, this is FREE to FPDA members! At all times, and in particular challenging times, financial benchmarking is more important than ever before. The best source of financial benchmarks for my company is FPDA. It should be for yours too! As I said earlier, "If you're not tracking your performance, you have no idea where you're going!"



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Member to Member News

FPDA Welcomes New Member Lifco Hydraulics



Lifco Hydraulics, Buffalo is a full line Parker Hydraulics distributor and Linde Hydraulics distributor. We also supply many other hydraulic brand names as listed, but not limited to, those listed on our web site.

Lifco Hydraulics was established in 1979 by the President Ed Berkhout. Lifco is a hydraulic distributor, authorized service centre and are engineered sales professionals. For more information about Lifco Hydraulics, visit www.lifcohydraulics-usa.com.

Major Industrial Enterprise Software Company Chooses 3Delta Systems to Safeguard Credit Card Data Against Hackers

[Tribute, Inc.](#) has selected [3Delta Systems'](#) Card-Vault tokenization service to safeguard their customers' payment and credit card data as well as reduce their cost and scope of complying with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS). These standards require merchants to encrypt credit card data wherever it is stored and are considered the industry's foremost benchmark for cardholder account security.

Ohio-based Tribute Inc. provides enterprise-wide software to distributors and fabricators in the fluid power, fluid handling, hose, sealing, belting, automation, motion control and related industries at more than 600 locations throughout North America.

[Here's the full text of the release.](#)



BDI Acquires Gopher Bearing Company's St. Paul and Winona, Minnesota locations!



BDI (Bearing Distributors, Inc.), headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, announces the acquisition of Gopher Bearing Company's St. Paul and Winona, Minnesota locations, effective January 2011. Gopher Bearing Company has served businesses in the Twin Cities since 1946.

St. Paul-based Gopher Bearing, a division of BDI, will provide enhanced support and solutions to customers in the Twin Cities. The Gopher Bearing Winona operation will merge with the BDI LaCrosse, WI. Additionally, BDI will strengthen customer service with the anticipated first quarter 2011 launch of its new and improved on-line ordering site, www.bdiexpress.com. Joe Racine and the Gopher Bearing team are a welcomed addition to the BDI Family. Their experience and technical knowledge will ensure delivery of uninterrupted service to current customers. Joe's familiarity with the local market combined with BDI's global footprint, Supplier/Partner relationships and resources will deliver world-class service to both new and existing customers.

"The addition of Gopher Bearing Company to the BDI Family creates an experienced team of professionals that will expand our customer base and ability to deliver solutions to customers in Minnesota," according to John Ruth, President, BDI-USA.

Today, BDI's products are in use throughout a broad spectrum of industries: automotive, power generation, aggregate and mining, package handling, food and beverage processing, printing, wastewater treatment, paper processing, ethanol production and HVAC.

BDI has more than 140 locations across the United States, Canada, Mexico, China, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and India.

BDI is ISO 9001:2008 certified and dedicated to providing dependable, top-quality replacement parts, innovative solutions, and quality customer service.

For more information about BDI please visit www.bdiworldwide.com; or contact Bill Shepard, Director of Sales & Marketing, at 216/642-9100 x10014 (tel) or bshepard@bdi-usa.com

FPDA KEY INDICATOR REPORT OFFERS A WEALTH OF DATA YOU CAN USE

FPDA, in conjunction with Cleveland Research Company, has released the January 2011 FPDA Key Indicator Report based in part on data collected from FPDA Distributor and Manufacturer Members. Highlights of the January report include:

FPDA Index Steady – The FPDA Index reading for the month of December is 64.6, unchanged from November and modestly lower than October's reading of 65.6. This indicates the fluid power industry expanded at a consistent rate compared to November. This is generally consistent with the broader ISM Purchasing Managers' index which accelerated very slightly to a reading of 57.0 in December from 56. in November.

Sales Growth Robust – Sales growth among FPDA members remains robust despite facing increasingly difficult comparisons. On average, participants reported sales growth of 24% in December. While this represents a slower pace of growth compared with October and November, it is better-than-expected against year ago comparisons that are roughly 15% more difficult.

More Optimistic 2011 Outlook – Confidence in the sustainability of the ongoing industrial recovery appears to be improving helped by better visibility due to growing backlogs and a more business friendly federal government following the mid-term elections. On average, members are now anticipating full year growth of 12% for 2011 up from the prior view of 10%. Within this, distributors are now forecasting 14% growth versus prior expectations of 10% growth and manufacturers' outlook increased to 11% also from a prior view of 10%.

Graphs and analysis on monthly sales growth, sales growth outlooks, end market performance, pricing and inventory environments, and key manufacturing sector indicators are provided in the Report. To view the report, go to www.fpda.org – FPDA Key Economic Indicators. You will be prompted for your user name and password. **Remember that your username is your email address. If you do not remember your password, just click on "Forgot Password" and you will be sent a temporary password which you may update.**

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE SECOND FPDA/ISD 2011 JOINT INDUSTRY SUMMIT!

SEPTEMBER 6-9, 2011

FPDA is excited to announce the Fairmont Princess, Scottsdale, Arizona as the location of our 2011 Joint Summit with ISD. Once again we will be partnering with ISD to bring our members unparalleled opportunities for networking and education. Save the dates! September 6 – 9 at the incredible room rate of \$159/night. This rate will be extended for attendees for three days prior to and after the event, so consider including some personal vacation time at a fabulous resort! Stay tuned for more details





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With the recent addition of 50,000 square feet of warehouse and manufacturing space, Yates Industries has streamlined its operations to provide faster order fulfillment, a larger inventory and even more repair and custom manufacturing capabilities.

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How High Is Your Sales IQ?

By: Mark Heerema

You see, when you are with a prospect, you only have so much time before your meeting ends. Once you leave that meeting, your opportunity is only as good as the information you receive. The information you receive is generally determined by the questions you ask. We only get what we ask!

The Treasure Is There, You Just Need the Combination

Imagine every prospective customer's mind is like a sealed vault, and that behind its metal, locked doors lay the treasure you are looking for. You know, due to the strength and size of the door no human is strong enough to force it open. Rather, the only way in is to get the information from the person who knows the combination. Obviously though, the owner of the treasure does not give the combination out willingly. Someone looking for this information would have to be very skilled in asking specific questions that might give them clues as to what the combination might be.

That is exactly how the sales game plays out. Inside of your prospects mind is all the information you need. The question isn't, *where is the information?* But rather, *will you get it!* Then, as answers unfold, the information you receive slowly opens up the opportunity until you eventually have all of the necessary information to present a "no-brainer" solution. Every question you have that has a strategic measure behind it is like you getting another number in the combination. [Questions must be strategic.](#)

You need to have a **specific intent** behind **EVERY** question,

otherwise why ask it! The more precise and effective your questions are, the more numbers of the combination you get! But, you don't get numbers for the combination when your questions are generic, because the information from those questions don't provide you with any clues about the treasure.

How High is Your Sales "IQ"?

It might seem like a small difference, but the ability of asking intentional questions (IQ) IS the difference between one salesperson having AN opportunity, versus another having a WINNING opportunity!

Here's how I explain the importance of our questions to those I coach.

The more information I have the more confident I feel in my opportunity, and the quality of my information I collect is determined by the questions I ask.

If you only take one nugget from this article, take this:

The better your information, the better your odds are of closing the deal.

The quality of information you receive = the effectiveness of your questions.

How good your questions are WILL me a MAJOR factor in your success.

A Strategy Should Accompany Each Question

You see, when you are with a prospect, you only have so much time before your meeting ends. Once you leave that meeting, your opportunity is only as good as the information you receive. The information you receive is generally determined by the questions you ask. We only get what we ask! During that meeting you only have so many questions; you must make them count. Getting the most of each question means that the questions you ask need to have intent behind them. Know why you are asking the question you are asking! Otherwise you will neglect to receive the information you want.

Continued on next page

How High Is Your Sales IQ? continued

If you don't know what you are looking for, you will never find it.

Here's a common example I see while [coaching sales people](#). A sales person will ask the prospect who they are currently buying their widgets from. This question by itself is a good question, and gives you some helpful information, but it is only the start. Many sales people stop there because they are not thinking strategically about what information that could lead too. They ask that question because they were told to or heard someone else ask it. The problem is that question is not followed up with additional questions, and that's where the gold is!

Look at how valuable the information is if you add these two simple questions after "Who are you buying from?"

"How long have you been using them?"

Reason behind the question: the length of the relationship is the best indicator of how deep the relationship is. If the relationship has existed for a number of years, the likelihood of a quick and drastic change is slim. But if the client has not been buying from your competitor for too long, your chances of them making a change improve dramatically.

"Would you be willing to switch to me if our package is a better solution for you?"

Reason behind the question: people want to believe they have the power to make decisions, but in reality, few actually do. Many times I have heard people say something like, "I would need to get corporate approval first." Or, "Maybe...we'll see." Then you know there is more. This question qualifies your time before you go spend it pursuing them! (Bonus: An additional bonus to this question is it forces the client to imagine what they would do if your package is better. Certainly, I would much rather have them answer that question while I am

face to face with them versus leaving it to chance when they are alone reviewing a proposal without me present).

Bonus time: Want to know a great way to ease tension and break down the walls that prospects put up? USE HUMOR.

The tip I am about to reveal to you works almost EVERY time I use it. What I suggest you do is combine the importance of the "commitment question" with humor. Because you MUST ask the prospect if they will use you, but when done with humor it makes it much easier and not such an awkward time.

Here's what I'd say: "So, John. If I save you money and can come through with the other requirements we discussed, would you be willing to break up with your current girlfriend and go steady with me?" Most people will at least chuckle, but if not, they will definitely understand what you want them to do.

See, I always know before I step foot in my prospects facility, that the reason for me asking who they are buying from is to find out how good my opportunity really is. But, I don't know that if I only know who they are buying from now. I only know who their current vendor is!

Additional benefits of "IQ":

Asking intentional questions also give you direction, focus, and clarity. We never know where a conversation is going to go. It could go in a million different directions, and sometimes, it is necessary for us to follow suit. However, it is still in your best interest to leave with the information YOU need. Equipping yourself with a series of purposeful questions gives you a course of action to revert back too, even when the client pulls you off the trail.

If you don't have intent in your questions you won't ask them because you don't know why you need too!

Continued on next page

How High Is Your Sales IQ? continued

So, guess where you will find yourself at the end of every meeting? Wherever the client takes you! *The key is to go “with them” when necessary, and then skillfully bring them back to your strategic line of questioning, or back on your path.*

Asking intentional questions also provides you with an open door to uncover hidden needs of the customer. Like someone who holds the combination to a vault, they aren't going to willingly tell you what it is. You have to skillfully ask questions to get the information you want. A sales pro understands it is up to them to find that combination, and they know how to get that information out of the person holding it!

Once you have strategically put together questions that dig into uncovering their issues, then you have given yourself an opportunity to first find out if they are TRULY interested, and two put yourself in a position to provide a solution.

Finding the gold:

1. Write down the five most important questions you want to ask every prospective customer you speak with. Take them with you. Do not leave until you get the answers. Also, run these five questions by the most successful person in your office. Ask them if those questions will get you inside the “vault” to where the treasure is.

2. Commit to putting your “IQ” to work in the next 3 meetings you have. You will find your information puts you in a premium position to serve a new client.

About the Author:

Mark Heerema is the author of six books, owns his own speaking and coaching companies, and is being recognized for his unique and proven position on sales achievement. Mark attributes the success of his message to, “finally revealing why traditional sales training hasn't worked, while providing sales people with a real and proven solution that shows them how to get exactly what they want so they can use the strategies they know!”

FPDA UPCOMING EDUCATION EVENTS

Due to this year's successful webinars with Bob DeStefano of SVM E-business solutions and David Nour of the Nour Group, FPDA and AEA (Association Education Alliance) will be offering a series of Sales and Marketing webinars again this year. More details and online registration for these events and other educational offerings are available on www.fpda.org!

March 7-10, 2011 University of Industrial Distribution, IUPUI, Indianapolis, Indiana

September 6-8, 2011 - Sales Professional BootCamp with Don Buttrey, Dayton, Ohio





Tip: Retrain Your Salespeople to Go After Market Share, Jim Ambrose

A big challenge for distributors is that salespeople tend to get comfortable in their account packages - a problem when those accounts are buying fewer items thanks to a still-down market. Jim Ambrose, author of [Cracking Accounts](#), says that salespeople need to be retrained and reenergized to find where sales are. For those who aren't willing to take a new approach to their work? He says: "You might want to take them out because they're not adapting the reality of economics and coming up with a more disciplined approach."

Ambrose's approach is to focus on improving Return on Effort put forth by salespeople. "If ever there was a best opportunity to increase your sales discipline, the time is now because you can significantly improve your business if you increase your salespeople's activities to go after low-hanging fruit, or crack the easiest accounts. Your competitors are assuming that if they're losing business right now it's because of the economy. If you go in there with a new approach to sales, you could start to pick up some share at these accounts. Maybe they're slower today but if they're not out of business, they're still buying product."

Jim has more than 30 years in the wholesale distribution industry. He specializes in doing "turn-arounds" and conducting his popular workshop "Business Skills and Leadership Training for the Wholesale Distribution Branch Manager." Jim Ambrose can be reached at (315) 430-5631 or jambros1@twcny.rr.com.

11 ways to prepare for the recovery

Businesses that have cut to the bone to survive the economic downturn could be caught off guard when business starts to pick up again. In a recent article from the Houston Chronicle, Jacqueline Taylor advises business owners to stay connected and to nurture key relationships. Other tips: Focus on the customer, and make sure every action is designed to help draw in more business.

Q: I've seen some signs that business is picking up, and I want to be as prepared as possible to take advantage of an upturn. Do you have any tips for getting my business in shape for the new year?

A: Become customer-centric. Do everything with an eye toward getting those customers coming through your door.

- Learn to leverage your time, money and manpower. Take advantage of tools and resources and utilize your employees to their full capacity.
- Focus on outcomes and not outputs. Don't confuse activity with productivity.
- Commit to profitable products and services. Drop lines that are costing more to produce than they're worth in sales.

- Commit to profitable customers. Don't let problem customers be a drain on your time and money.
- Become a marketing master. Look into better ways to touch your current customers and reach new ones.
- Master your [financial statements](#). Regularly review your income statement, [balance sheet](#) and cash flow statement, and be sure you understand what all the numbers mean.
- Control expenses. Find ways to lower your cost of goods and reduce your operating expenses.
- Continue your professional development. Learn something new or take classes that will improve your current skills.
- Develop key relationships. People who can help your business stay on top include your accountant, attorney, banker, insurance agent, vendors and suppliers.
- Stay connected. Join your [Chamber of Commerce](#), [professional association](#) or get involved with your local [economic development](#) organization.

Jacqueline Taylor is associate region director of the UH Small Business Development Center, a partnership of the U.S. Small Business Administration and the university's C.T. Bauer College of Business Administration, at 713-752-8444. Information is intended to provide general guidance only.

At last, a strategic planning book just for wholesaler-distributors!



Creating and executing a successful business strategy is every distribution leader's No. 1 job. Order the brand-new book [Strategic Planning for Distributors: Execution Isn't Everything -- It's the Only Thing!](#) It provides 11 proven best-practice strategy steps to apply to your business in this rapidly changing, competitive environment. It draws on more than two decades of distribution research with strategy execution secrets of successful wholesaler-distributors.

More Info on this essential book to strategically plan for 2011 [here](#).

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▼ UID CLASS SCHEDULE

MONDAY, MARCH 7

- 001. Marketing Strategies [Marks] Morning
- 002. Pricing Strategies [Marks] Afternoon
- 003. Improving the Distributor's Bottom Line [Bates]
- 004. You can Always Sell More – How to Improve Any Sales Force [Pancero]
- 005. Creating a Competitive Distinction [Underhill]
- 006. Leadership & Delegation for Distribution Managers [Land]
- 007. Differentiating Your Distribution Company – A Winning Strategy [McCleave]

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

- 008. Achieving Effective Inventory Control [Schreibfeder]
- 009. From Dull to Dynamic: Transforming Your Presentations [Boyd]
- 010. The Power of the Spoken Word [Boyd]
- 011. Productivity Tactics for Branch Managers [Merrifield]
- 012. Profit Myths in Wholesale Distribution [Bates]
- 013. Managing the Account Portfolio [Monoky]
- 014. Real World Branding Strategy for the Industrial Products Manufacturer [Marks]
- 015. Managing Distributor Sales Activities for the Manufacturer Territory Sales Executive [Marks]
- 016. Proving Total Cost Savings [Underhill]

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

- 017. Branch & Operations Management [Workman]
- 018. Sales Planning for Industrial Distributors [Monoky]
- 019. Creating a Winning Marketing Plan [McQuiston]
- 020. Planning and Managing the Distributorship for Greater Profits [Rice]
- 021. Hiring the Right Salespeople [Eilers]
- 022. Improving Profitability Thru Joint Sales Calls [Eilers]
- 023. Value-Added Selling [Reilly]

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

- 024. Personnel Productivity Improvement [Newton]
- 025. Customers: How to Keep The Best for Life [Rice]
- 026. Increasing Your Sales Force's 'EQ' [McQuiston]
- 027. Negotiation Skills for Distributors [Schatzki]
- 028. New Process of Distribution Sales Management [Eilers]
- 029. Fundamentals Business Skills and Leadership Training for Today's Distribution Branch Manager [Ambrose]
- 030. Creating Shareholder Value in Wholesale Distribution [Deist]



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FPDA Small Parcel Value Program

Announcing the FPDA Small Parcel Value Program

FPDA would like to announce an affiliation with Integrated Shipping Solutions, Inc. The objective of this affiliation is to save members of FPDA a significant amount of money on their small parcel shipping costs, by allowing professional consultants to negotiate shipping discounts on individual members' behalf. ISS is currently saving association members millions on their small parcel shipping. As a FPDA member, you can now take advantage of their expertise at a special reduced rate.

About Integrated Shipping Solutions, Inc.

Integrated Shipping Solutions, Inc. was founded by two former UPS business development people to level the playing field for small parcel shippers. ISS representatives spent years negotiating shipping contracts on the carriers' behalf.



Now ISS representatives leverage their intricate knowledge of the small parcel carrier pricing structures, as well as competition to get your company the best deal in the market today. ISS negotiates with the three major small parcel carriers on your company's behalf and you choose which carrier you use. Typical ISS clients remain shipping with their current incumbent carrier, at a significantly reduced rate. Whichever carrier you choose to use, you can be assured that your new carrier agreement is truly optimized by experts in the industry.

Why Your Company Does Not Currently Have the Best Small Parcel Pricing Now

Account executives employed by shipping companies are compensated on net revenue paid into the company by their customers. Their commission pay depends on every dollar you pay. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the account executive to hold back all, or as much discount as possible, to retain/win your business. Account executives rely on the simple fact that you, the customer, have **no frame of reference** for recognizing a good shipping rate. Thus, all the negotiating power lies in the hands of the account executive. This is how ISS and the knowledge of our associates expedite the process, and level the playing field for you. ISS knows what incentives you really qualify for. Shipping companies want to keep you uninformed, because an uninformed consumer equals higher margins and more commissions for them. **ISS negotiates with your best interest in mind. Carriers simply do not.**

Free Consultation & Shipping Analysis

Contact ISS to discuss your current small parcel shipping situation and how they can save you money. Members should announce that they are members of FPDA, and they will be directed to Brett Stubblefield or Derrick Olson, the owners and founders of Integrated Shipping Solutions, Inc. They will discuss with you exactly how the service works, your current situation, and the next steps to start saving your company money on small parcel shipping. For more information, visit our website, www.integratedshipping.com.

ISS is an absolute no-risk service, as ISS is only paid a percentage of actual realized savings we are able to achieve for our clients. ISS has a positive impact on cash flow from day 1.

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