



“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 Steve Schwasnick, Western Integrated Technologies, Inc. Bellevue, Washington

Things have been busy here at the FPDA Office as we are gearing up for another successful Joint FPDA/ISD Industry Summit on September 6-9. This year, the meeting will be held at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess in Scottsdale, Arizona. This year’s program will again provide multiple networking and social opportunities as well as in-depth educational sessions. Our theme is “Taking Charge of Change!” .

Our industry has certainly seen highs and lows, but the past few years have proven that those who survive and thrive embrace and implement change rapidly and efficiently. They find opportunity in challenge and act! The 2011 FPDA-ISD Joint Industry Summit will focus on taking charge of change with a program built to give you proven tips to take back to your office to help you embrace change in order to provide a greater path to profits and efficient operations.

Learn about what’s happening in purchasing and how it relates to your sales efforts with Tim Underhill; explore the shifts in workplace demographics and learn what you can do to prepare for the emerging workforce with Kathy Newton of Purdue University; delve into selling solutions and how to effectively measure value; gain the latest industry news and trends while networking with your industry colleagues. And, we have an interesting and entertaining lesson on how you can use face reading to improve your communications! This, and more, awaits you at the 2011 Joint Industry Summit. Continued on next page

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Save The Date For the 2011 FPDA/ISD Joint Industry Summit!
September 6-9, 2011
Fairmont Princess Scottsdale, Arizona
 More details to come soon!



A Message from the FPDA President—Continued from cover page

As we settle into a new reality and adapt to our evolving business climate, it is time for us to become more proactive and less reactive to the changing business forces. Come to learn and leave with actionable items you can implement upon your return to the office!

And in other areas, we are also still experiencing healthy participation in our benchmarking efforts which are designed to provide the members with relevant benchmarking data and industry statistics. These current deliverables include the Monthly Economic Indicators Report, and the monthly Snapshot Survey. For those companies that participate, we are receiving positive feedback and the more companies that participate, the better the results! If you would like additional information on any of these reports, please contact the FPDA staff at info@fpda.org.

FPDA is also in the process of producing this year's Annual Profit Report. This valuable report presents a wealth of financial and operating guidelines. In addition, it provides direct comparisons between your firm and other participating firms. Now, more than ever, benchmarking data is critical to business decisions. As with any benchmarking, the more companies that participate, the better the report. The deadline for submission is May 30th so do not delay. For additional information about the Profit Report, contact Molly Thompson, our Program Manager at mthompson@fpda.org.

As the warmer weather starts to arrive, we are looking forward to an exciting couple of months for FPDA. Please feel free to contact me at sschwasnick@westernintech.com.

I look forward to seeing all of you in September!



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Monthly Report on Economic Indicators Again Shows Improvement!

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

FPDA Index Up from February – The March FPDA Index produced a reading of 81.1, up from the February reading of 77.6. This indicates the fluid power industry expanded at a faster pace compared to February. The March results suggest the fluid power industry continues to grow at a faster pace than the broader manufacturing economy as measured by the ISM Purchasing Manager's index. The ISM index posted a reading of 61.2 in March, down slightly from the February reading of 61.4, marking the 20th consecutive month of growth.

Sales Growth Accelerates – Sales growth among fluid power participants remains surprisingly robust despite facing increasingly difficult comparisons. On average, participants reported sales growth of 31% in March, up from the 29% growth in February, against a 1300bps more difficult comparison.

2011 Outlook Improves for 4th Consecutive Month – Strong incoming orders are supporting healthy backlogs which appear to be driving increased confidence in the sustainability of the ongoing industrial recovery as participants raised their full year outlook again. On average, participants are now anticipating full year growth of 19% for 2011 up slightly from the prior view of up 18%. This marks the fourth straight monthly increase and is up sharply from the initial view calling for 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.



ATTENTION DISTRIBUTORS!
ANNUAL PROFIT REPORT DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MONDAY, MAY 30!
FPDA NOW OFFERS AN EXCEL REPORTING DOCUMENT

FPDA Members have long extolled the value of the annual Profit Report prepared by Profit Planning Group. Now, we are making this even easier for distributors to participate with the addition of an Excel spreadsheet to aid in submitting data to PPG. This report is offered to members free of charge. Many associations charge a fee for participation, but FPDA feels this report provides a valuable member service and your Board elects to offer this to Distributor Members without cost.

Why should you participate?

The era of automatic profits has come to a sudden halt. The industry has moved from trying to keep up with demand to battling sales, pricing, expense control and every other aspect of operations.

In turbulent times, financial benchmarking information is more important than ever before. The best source of financial benchmarks for the industry is the FPDA PROFIT Survey. 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 management or expense control?"

In short, this report presents a wealth of financial and operating guidelines. In addition, it provides direct comparisons between your firm and other participating firms. This valuable information is, however, **only** available to firms that participate in the study.

For more information, please contact Molly Thompson at mthompson@fpda.org.

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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How to Triple Your Online Sales Leads

By Bob DeStefano



To turn your website into a lead generation machine, put the following proven tips into action.

Lead generation consistently ranks as a top priority for industrial companies. However, most companies handicap their online lead generation efforts by relying on their website's 'Contact Us' page as the sole method for prospects to take action. To turn your website into a money-maker, put the following proven recommendations into action. I have seen many companies more than triple their sales leads with these tips.

Make a Call to Action

Do you want to turn your website into a lead generation machine? Then stop relying on your 'Contact Us' page. Rather, offer visitors easy access to contact information on every page of your Website in a consistent location. I like to see calls to action offered in the top right section of every page. You will be amazed by how many more prospects will reach out to you if you invite them to do so.

Appeal to Prospects at Every Stage of the Buying Cycle

Only 10 percent of your website visitors are ready to buy. The other 90 percent are kicking tires. Offer a variety of calls to action that appeal to prospects at every stage of the buying process. This will help you generate leads for near-term business, as well as build a marketing database to nurture future opportunities. Additional calls to action can include:

- 'Ask the Experts' form for pre-sales questions
- Online chat to reach out to salespeople
- Registrations for seminars, webinars or events
- Register to access whitepapers, presentations, articles, etc.
- Free samples

- Free consultations
- Subscribe to your e-mail newsletter

Prominently Display Your Phone Number

According to my research, people are at least as likely, if not more likely, to pick up the phone and call when they are browsing a company's website. To boost the number of inquiries you receive, don't make your visitors hunt for your phone number. Make your phone number one of the prominent calls to action on every page of your website and encourage prospects to call you. There is no better time for your salespeople to be speaking with prospects because they can use your website as a presentation tool.

Optimize Your Forms for Leads & Sales

Are your Web forms helping or hurting your lead generation efforts? Your Website may have more than enough traffic to achieve your sales goals, but your forms may be getting in the way. Most online forms are too long, too hidden or too un-persuasive to generate leads – but you need them to fill your sales pipeline. Follow these tips to boost your leads by fixing your forms:

Use a simple and clean design.

Make your forms appear easy to complete by leveraging 'white space' to improve legibility, remove all unnecessary elements and ensure your field labels are understandable.

Remove unnecessary fields.

Are your online lead generation forms as long and daunting as a tax return? If so, shorten them. The more fields your forms include, the less likely prospects will be to fill them out. Ask only for basic contact information that your salespeople will need to make an intelligent follow-up.

Continued on next page

How To Triple Online Sales Leads - Continued from next page

Fix your buttons.

No one wants to 'submit.' Label your buttons so they represent the action the prospect wants to take. Use phrases like Order Now, Sign Up, Get Started, Begin Free Trial, Request a Quote, Please Contact Me, etc. Also, use large buttons with contrasting colors so the button pops off the page.

Get creative – use the 'Mad Libs' approach.

Try offering your lead generation form in a narrative format, presenting input fields to people as blanks within sentences. It is a fun and interesting way for prospects to take the next step.

Get creative – ask a question.

Replace your field labels with complete questions, such as 'How much do you want to buy?' instead of 'Quantity.' It makes your form friendlier and easier to understand.

Shorten your checkout process.

If you sell products online, look for opportunities to simplify your checkout process. Cut the number of clicks required to complete the sale. Communicate shipping costs early. Offer a progress meter to let people know where they are in the process. In addition, offer alternative (offline) ways to order.

Have a Process in Place to Ensure Immediate Follow-up.

How long does it take for your salespeople to follow-up online lead inquiries? If the follow-up is not immediate, you are leaving money on the table. Assign salespeople to follow-up online leads and make sure the inquiries get to them as soon as possible. Also, don't let leads languish in someone's inbox – look for technology solutions to shorten the follow-up time.

Bob DeStefano is an online marketing strategist and professional marketing speaker with more than 15 years experience helping industrial companies leverage online marketing to produce bottom-line results.

www.bobdestefano.com ∞

Management Tip: Protect Employee Knowledge with Experience-Based Learning



At many distributors, some employees have been around for decades. These employees have a deep knowledge of how to get things done; unfortunately, this type of knowledge is not usually written down, and so companies often lose it when those employees retire or leave for another company. "There is a vast underestimation of the hole people leave behind after a downsizing or a retirement," says Harvard professor Dorothy Leonard in [Protecting Your Knowledge Base](#).

Using everyday opportunities for experience-based learning is one way to ensure that younger or newer employees are gaining the experience needed to follow in a retiree's footsteps. Very often, companies neglect opportunities for observation or shadowing in the workplace. But these opportunities can make the learning curve that much less steep when the time comes to hand the reins to the next generation.

According to a survey by MDM – featured in [A Demographic Shift in Distribution](#) – nearly half of younger workers look for management training programs when considering potential employers. About 43 percent say the opportunity to learn new skills is one of the most important attributes of a potential employer. And management training opportunities were a popular choice for survey respondents to the question: What do you consider to be the most important methods for rewarding work?

Distributors should take advantage of younger workers' strong desire to learn and incorporate experience-based learning and mentoring/coaching programs into their existing training programs.

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Topics covered in this 60-minute program include:

- What is Lean?
- Lean Leadership Culture
- Lean Values and Principles
- Cultural Patterns of High-Performing Organizations
- Tools that Create the Lean Culture in a Distribution Environment
- Summary/Q&A

[Learn more.](#)

FPDA UPCOMING EDUCATION EVENTS

The FPDA Office has some exciting new educational offerings that we are making available through the Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating (CIPH) which will offering your employees valuable business and leadership skills. More details and online registration for these events and other educational offerings are available on www.fpda.org!

September 6-9, 2011 [FPDA/ISD 2011 Joint Summit](#)

Scottsdale Fairmont Princess , Scottsdale, Arizona

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



NAW Update—Notice of Employee Rights Under Federal Labor Laws



FROM: Jade West

NAW Senior Vice President-Government Relations

As you all will remember, in 2009 the Department of Labor issued a proposed rule requiring most Federal contractors and subcontractors to post a “Notice of Employee Rights Under Federal Labor Laws.” NAW and other groups submitted comments to the Labor Department opposing the notice requirement and specifically objecting to the inaccurate language of the notice.

While the Labor Department did respond to some of the criticism of the flawed and inaccurate language in their proposed notice and made changes in that language, they nevertheless promulgated a final rule requiring that the notice be posted by covered contractors.

Last December, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) entered into this issue, publishing “Proposed Rules Governing Notification of Employee Rights Under the National Labor Relations Act.” The NLRB rule would require all employers covered by the NLRA to post the same notice that the Department of Labor requires of Federal contractors.

NAW has again filed comments objecting to this proposed rule, arguing among other points that the NLRB lacks the statutory authority to impose this requirement. In addition, the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace (CDW), on which NAW serves as part of the Management Committee, filed comments on behalf of 180 trade associations and employer groups.

There is no date set for a final ruling from the NLRB.

To read NAW’s comments, go to:

<http://www.naw.org/files/NAWcommentsNLRB.pdf>

To read CDW’s comments, go to:

http://myprivateballot.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/110222_cdw_comments_nlr_poster.pdf

And to read the CDW press release, calling the proposed notice posting requirement “the poster child of bad ideas,” go to:

<http://myprivateballot.com/2011/02/22/employer-coalition-urges-nlr-to-tear-down-poster-plan/>



KEELEY, KUENN & REID

California Halts Manufacturer From Prohibiting Online Retailers’ Sales For Less than MSRP

This case involves Bioelements, Inc., a company that markets a line of proprietary beauty products and its resell of its products to certain retailers.

Under California’s Antitrust law, it is unlawful for a manufacturer to require, or agree with, a wholesaler-distributor or other reseller to resell the manufacturer’s product only at the minimum price (eg: not below MSRP) or at a set price. This case represents that federal antitrust law does not preempt state antitrust law.

The settlement is one of the first applications of California’s strict state antitrust law banning vertical price-fixing, in the wake of a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision that relaxed federal antitrust law in this area.

[View Complete Article About the Case.](#)

Activant Anticipates More Virtual Collaboration in B2B Distribution



Activant Solutions Inc., a leading technology provider of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software for distributors and specialty retailers, shared its vision for using ERP systems of record in combination with social media to help wholesale distributors improve efficiencies, customer engagement and collaboration at Summit 2011, held in Orlando, Florida, earlier this month. Activant’s annual Summit conference is one of the largest and most well-established events of its type in the world.

Nearly 2,000 Summit attendees enjoyed three days of educational sessions and networking events designed to enhance their utilization of Activant® ERP solutions. Kevin Roach, executive vice president and general manager of Activant’s Wholesale Distribution division, kicked off the event by discussing the collaborative potential that a social media revolution represents for today’s ERP systems. Additionally, he unveiled two new products, Activant AutoOrder™, a module designed to eliminate manual order entry, and DynaChange™ Rules, an extensibility tool created to enable distributors to configure and insert their own workflow logic into the Activant Prophet 21® ERP system.

Roach noted in his opening address, “We envision an ERP evolution, in which ‘systems of engagement’ perform a vital role to help a distributor’s business become more responsive to customers, and more efficient operationally.

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Activant - continued from page 10

Virtual conversations regarding customer service, contract fulfillment, or project delivery become more meaningful augmented with the context of related transactions from systems of record. That's where the payoff comes, by making it easier and more automatic to collaborate around information stored in the ERP system."

As an example, Roach discussed the idea of workgroup wikis. "The process of getting any complex job done involves a series of conversations – asking questions, and gathering ideas and feedback," he said. "Imagine all of those conversation threads consolidated in a single dedicated wiki workspace, accessible through any smartphone or computer. Wikis enable a convenient, centralized archival view that includes communications from all relevant parties. Everyone can share the full context of who, what and why; get relevant feedback; update documents; and initiate new transactions – all in one location. In this hypothetical system of engagement, we establish automated workflow processes that deliver structured and unstructured information – e-mails, document links, and posts – faster to anyone with a need to know."

Renowned business consultant, visionary and best-selling author Geoffrey Moore elaborated on these themes in his keynote presentation, "The Future of Enterprise IT." Moore stated, "The new global value chain is based on relationship management: coordinating, collaborating and communicating to expedite and troubleshoot orders across an ecosystem of suppliers and channel partners. Distributors and other participants in the chain need to engage across a broad set of constituents, and are looking to have the same kind of individual empowerment that is currently available in the *consumer* IT space: information and video on demand, instant communication, and so on. We think that collaborative business networks are the 'forcing function' that will cause distribution companies to invest in systems of engagement."

Attendees were impressed by the presentations, as well as the opportunities for hands-on training and networking at Summit 2011. According to James Davis, president of Industrial Specialties Manufacturing of Denver, Colo., "We found Summit very informative, the presenters well prepared, and the content relevant to our current business needs. For an experienced user, it's an opportunity to see what's new and different, to keep escalating our system utilization."

Added William Foster, IT manager at Packard Inc. of Kennesaw, Georgia, "Summit is great for gathering tips, learning what new products are on the horizon, and networking with peers who may already have a solution for issues you are facing. I get ROI the day after I leave here, and the other 364 days a year."

Summit 2012 is scheduled to take place March 13-16, 2012, at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas. Links to the presentations by Geoffrey Moore and Kevin Roach are available on YouTube:

General Session with Kevin Roach

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlTRAtAAHzU>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUrA2zGtYfw>

Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XunhKFrng3c>

Part 4: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEUlvQwRgLY>

Keynote with Geoffrey Moore

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfXpW4Q4c6A>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muaHUEzxnYQ>

Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HQXxBQC7AM>

About Activant Solutions Inc.

Activant Solutions Inc. ("Activant") is a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving distributors and SMB retailers. Activant provides customers with industry-specific software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics.

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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.

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