

Where Does Technology Fit in Your Business?

Everyone has heard Einstein's definition of insanity: "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

Unfortunately, many of us are guilty of this from time to time. And with the recent (and some distributors say continuing) recession, many distributors have not invested sufficiently in their technology offerings to keep pace with the needs of their contractor customers.

Technology changes quickly. Improving margins, improving productivity, improving customer service, and increasing sales are now impacted, to varying degrees, by technology.

Recently, Allen Ray Associates and Channel Marketing Group conducted their 2011 Contractor Insights Report, which is available at www.electricaltrends.com. A couple of things caught our eye:



- Invoice, and hence order, accuracy is the 2nd highest criteria in how contractors evaluate distributors.
- 55.7% of respondents would be interested in e-catalogs and 38.6% say they currently have access to e-catalogs (could be the manufacturers' or possibly your competitors!)
- 43% of respondents do some online purchasing through a distributor.
- 37% are interested in iPhone / smartphone applications with 50% of contractors having smartphones (interestingly 37.6% are using them to take photos of damaged products or to request change orders).

So, what do we think it means?

- Distributors need the right product information in their ERP systems.
- Contractors are looking for product information online, sometimes using it to make purchasing decisions.
- Contractors are becoming more technically savvy and are trying to improve their productivity.

At **Trade Service**, our goal is to help you leverage product information to produce profits.

If you're trying to improve your top line and/or your bottom line, consider making some technology investments (and there could be tax benefits).

- Use **eDataFlex®** to improve the quality of your system's product and pricing information.
- Ask us to cleanse your data and/or add your in-to-stock pricing to your data feed.
- Provide the industry's broadest, fastest e-catalog to your sales force with **TRA-SER® SX**.
- Connect to your preferred customers with **Supplier Xchange™**, helping streamline their quotation process, and yours.

And, to do our part to keep up with these technology changes, we're getting ready to launch some new products early in 2011, aimed at increasing your profitability, productivity, and customer service levels. Call to schedule a demo or a meeting at the NAED South Central.

Learn more by contacting Bob Stone at **866-561-5942** or by [email](mailto:).

Allen Ray Associates and Channel Marketing Group's 2011 Contractor Insight Research report is available for purchase at www.electricaltrends.com. Research quoted was with the permission of Allen Ray Associates and Channel Marketing Group. Trade Service Company purchased the report to better understand contractor needs.

Keeping the Channel Connected

- 650 manufacturers
- 2,600,000 items
- 1,500 brands
- 1,110,000 items with images
- 800,000 items with technical attributes
- 1,200,000 items with catalog pages
- 150,000 additional items populated with image data each quarter (product & thumbnail images, catalog pages, install instructions, MSDS sheets)
- 50,000 new electrical SKUs added per month
- 10 new manufacturers added per month (average)
- 2,800 distributor locations on Supplier Xchange™
- Over \$300 million in parts priced through Supplier Xchange monthly

Reaching Your Customer

- 20,000 contractor / government agency / institutional desktops



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▶ Take a tour



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