

▶ EMPOWERING DISTRIBUTORS: A LOOK INSIDE CONTINENTAL'S DISTRIBUTOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

WESLEY COURSEN, CONTINENTAL INDUSTRIAL HOSE MARKETING MANAGER

In a rapidly changing industrial market, suppliers must support their distribution partners in responding to evolving customer needs. To address this and build product knowledge in our distributor network, we recently revamped our industrial and hydraulic hose training program at Continental.

We wanted to go beyond product knowledge, though that obviously plays a big part. Our training covers many topics, including hose failure analysis, safety protocols, maintenance practices, understanding current and upcoming products, and proficiency in using our digital tools. Whether someone is a beginner entering the industry or an experienced professional, participants at any training level gain a wealth of knowledge and practical skills. This training enables them to interact with end users and confidently establish themselves as experts.

We recognize that generic solutions are insufficient in the competitive industrial landscape, so our curriculum delves into the unique challenges and needs of various sectors. We explore the practical applications of our products in detail, guiding distributors to offer customized solutions to their customers. These industry-focused discussions provide a deeper understanding of how our products integrate into a wide range of industrial ecosystems. We want to position distributors as trusted advisors of Continental products to end users. This tailored approach is essential for driving customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately bolstering the success of our distributors and the industry as a whole.

Continental's support does not end once training is over. We provide resources through our



ContiFluidSolutions website, an online, password protected information hub. The website features webinars, marketing materials, social media content, and portals to partner websites such as our digital storefront where distributors can order printed materials and in-store signage. This site is our go-to when it comes to marketing insights and product tips to keep our distributors updated on the latest advancements in Continental industrial and hydraulic hose.

The enhanced training initiative represents more than just an evolution — it is a revolution in developing a self-reliant, versatile, and highly skilled Continental distributor network.



COURSEN

▶ MANUFACTURER-DISTRIBUTOR PARTNERSHIPS

BRENT LILLY, VICE PRESIDENT, SALES & MARKETING, PT COUPLING

We are now seeing business returning to a more normal post-COVID-19 state.

Most businesses had taken steps to adjust inventories upwards and ensure that their customers did not seek sourcing elsewhere. This created a “back to the future” inventory hoarding mentality. And so today, there is a tremendous amount of pressure to find creative ways toward reducing on-hand inventory.

Distributors are turning to manufacturer partners to help find ways to speed up this inventory shift and once again be on a just-in-time footing. In the world of industrial hose, one of the biggest benefits involves the multitude

of product solutions available for any given application.

A back-to-basics approach suggests that finding ways besides just replacing existing part numbers is followed. This means taking extra time to look at application specifics (using “S.T.A.M.P.E.D.” to collect data), with an opportunity to make a solution recommendation using existing inventory as the answer.

In addition, we recommend working toward enhancing the relationship with users' engineering and planning staffs to have a more proactive plan (not reactive plan) for product replacements.



LILLY

TRENDS DRIVING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FRANK CAPRIO, CORPORATE TRAINER/MAJOR MARKET SPECIALIST, HOSE MASTER

The ongoing trend toward decarbonization has necessitated the development of “green” fuels such as hydrogen, ammonia, methanol, and various biofuels. Along with LNG, these fuels are expected to meet most of our energy needs in the not-too-distant future, so manufacturers need to make sure their products are able to meet the requirements of these rapidly evolving processes.

Corrugated metal hoses are ideal for these applications, as they provide flexibility in the system while offering numerous safety features including corrosion resistance to various media, fire resistance, low rates of media permeation, and the ability to handle high pressures as well as full vacuum. In order to make sure our products conform to these industry specifications, we actively participate on the technical committees of various standards organizations. Our knowledge of the products and the applications in which they are used assures that specifications are written with safety and performance in

mind while avoiding any excessive restrictions that can hinder competition.

Many of these standards may be too cumbersome for distributors to achieve or may require certification by the manufacturer. By obtaining certification for their products, manufacturers enable their distributors to seek out new business opportunities in emerging markets.

For example, CSA Group maintains many standards related to compressed and liquefied natural gas covering on-vehicle equipment as well as the station’s fueling system. Another example is in the marine sector where LNG, methanol, and ammonia are all viable fuel sources, and hydrogen is gaining favor as a potential source of green energy. The American Bureau of Shipping and other marine classification organizations write specifications for products used in marine applications.



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