YOU NEED A PARTNER, NOT A SUPPLIER

RAY HENSLEY, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RENOLD JEFFREY

The world of industrial sales is challenging. Competition and consolidation are increasing and pressure is on distributors to bring more value to the table. This makes choosing the right partners more important than ever.

Here are a few factors you should consider when deciding which manufacturers are partners:

- Do they have the products your customers need in inventory or, for custom products, can they make them quickly?
- Do they have a wide variety of products to meet different needs; tiered product levels so that you can capture business from all angles? Are they flexible?
- For custom and problem areas, do they have an on-staff engineering team that is dedicated to solving problems and working with your team to deliver results?
- Are they actively marketing their products to end users?
- Do they provide educational support to your staff?
- Do they stand behind their product? Are they a company that you can trust and are comfortable representing?
- Do they have experience in the market?

Not every product you sell requires a partner relationship. But if you want to grow your business and stand out from the crowd, selecting the right partner will certainly have a positive impact on your bottom line. As you evaluate your suppliers, you should be talking with them and making sure you are both on the same page. If you are heading in the same direction, it will help you both cross the finish line ahead of your competition.

Renold Jeffrey is a leading manufacturer of power transmission chain, to include roller chain and engineering chain. By continuing our long tradition of engineering expertise, design capabilities, and problem solving, we focus on how we can help our customers grow and prosper.


HENSLEY

FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER

RICK SWANSBRO, DIRECTOR OF CHANNEL DEVELOPMENT, HYDRAULIC TECHNOLOGIES DIVISION OF SPXFLOW

A common concern among industrial distributors today is unease over online retailers. We know who these online retailers are and accept the fact that they are rapidly changing the landscape of industrial distribution as we previously knew it. Exacerbating this concern is the demographic shift from baby boomers to today's millennials. Rather than calling a millennial, we are better served texting or emailing!

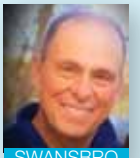
The same applies to their preferred method of shopping or placing orders . . . Point and click. This begs the question as to how brick and mortar distribution entities remain relevant in today's fast changing environment.

Let's first consider that there are two types of buying scenarios. A buying scenario typically considers that an item part number is in hand. The buyer simply needs to go to the internet, search for availability and price and click to purchase. The decision to purchase is predicated on price and availability. This scenario offers little value add and results in little or no loyalty to the online retailer.

The other scenario comprises the need for application assistance. The end user or OEM customer has a product or service needed to perform a job. In this case, the customer requires application assistance to identify a system solution that satisfies his or her need. Is this possible with an online retailer? Most likely, not. Rather, the customer will need to call upon a known and trusted distributor who is capable of understanding the customer's need and proposing a solution. This is value added service that fosters customer loyalty.

Conversely, let's consider the role of the supplier in support of authorized distribution. In the past, supplier sales tactics were largely predicated on push initiatives. In other words, push speculative inventory onto the distributor in order to meet a quarterly or annual sales target. This may have been possible decades ago, but is not an acceptable business practice today.

What has happened over the past number of decades? Power in the supply chain has shifted from supplier to distributor and now to the end user or OEM. Suppliers and distributors are better served today with pull strategies that generate demand for a given brand product. Effective pull strategies at the end customer include but are not limited to target marketing, product demonstrations, identifying customer pain points, educating the customer as to the value of your product or service, etc. In other words, focus on the customer!


SWANSBRO

MAXIMIZING BELT DRIVE SYSTEM EFFICIENCY

BRENT ELLIOTT, SENIOR APPLICATIONS ENGINEER, TIMKEN BELTS

Industry has made intensive efforts to improve the efficiency and productivity of motors and driven equipment. However, the belt drive connecting these components is critical to achieving maximum efficiencies. Two simple solutions for improved system performance are the use of energy efficient raw edge cog-belts or synchronous belts, and proper drive installation and maintenance.

According to the Department of Energy, wrapped belts operate on average at a 93-percent efficiency rate, raw edge cog-belts operate at 95 percent, and synchronous belts at 98 percent.

Raw edge cog-belts flex more easily around the sheave, generating less heat, which contributes to longer belt life. Raw edge side walls produce a higher coefficient of friction, which keeps a tighter grip on the sheave and minimizes slippage – a key point of efficiency loss. Simply replacing old belts on existing drives can result in measureable energy savings.

When designing a new drive or replacing worn sheaves on an existing drive, consider a synchronous drive system. The positive engagement between the belt and sprocket eliminates slippage and speed loss common to v-belts. Power transfer from the motor to the driven unit is on average 98 percent efficient.

A belt drive system loses efficiency when the belts and pulleys fail to maintain proper contact. Correcting drive installation factors such as improper tension, poor alignment and worn sheaves ensures that the drive is operating as designed, resulting in increased belt life, efficiency and performance.

Timken Belts offers a free web app to calculate energy savings. PowerMiser (powermiser.driveengineer.com) is a powerful, but simple, desktop and mobile-friendly app. Instantly see estimated annual energy costs, savings and payback on drives upgraded with Carlisle belts by Timken.

Using the right belt on a properly maintained drive will reduce downtime and maximize the efficiency of your belt drive system.


ELLIOTT