



THE INDUSTRIAL CAREERS PATHWAY®

A Pathway to...

GoodCareers
GoodPeople
GoodBusiness



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The Industrial Careers Pathway®

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Educating Tomorrow's Workforce

By John Masek, Bearing Service Inc.

As an employer, have you screened a candidate on the phone and wanted to tear your hair out when you hung up? The person responding to your ad can't distinguish between a manufacturer and a distributor. When you ask what role your company plays in the supply chain, the candidate doesn't have a clue.

Such is the challenge facing companies in industrial distribution. Ours is a "hidden industry."

Enter the Industrial Careers Pathway® (ICP). This North American effort is creating awareness of the excellent career opportunities that exist in industrial distribution. Eight pilot community colleges and technical school across the United States and Canada have developed "ID" certificate or 2-year degree programs. In order to expose students to a consistent set of core lessons, ICP developed a new online curriculum, *Elements of Industrial Distribution*. This online offering consists of four areas of study to expose students to all facets of industrial distribution:

- Fundamentals Organizational Overview
- Functional Operations Overview
- Customer Service and Sales
- Marketing and Profitability

A multi-disciplinary team was pulled together to develop the course. Although we sell different products, our processes are the same – as is the talent we need to recruit. With more than 75 different topics (modules) in the curriculum, *Elements* ensures that critical knowledge about the role of the industrial distributor is available to anyone with computer access.

As an employer active in the ICP program at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Mich., I am ecstatic about this new curriculum's possibilities. Educational institutions can incorporate the course lessons in either a classroom or online setting. The online curriculum allows pilot sites to reach a broader pool of students. And, from the students' standpoint, online options are important, particularly since many work full-time and need greater flexibility as they pursue their studies.

Additionally, while most North American industrial distributors are local or regional, many large industrial distributors span several states or provinces. A standard curriculum is the first step to making certificates and degrees portable and universally recognized by prospective employers.

Currently, employers far from a local pilot site have less access to potential employees with work experience or training in industrial distribution. *Elements* accelerates the training process. And, for existing employees taking on new roles within their companies, the *Elements* modules provide exposure to all facets of the business.

ICP is an ambitious effort to educate "the world" that excellent career opportunities exist in our "hidden industry." Now, through *Elements of Industrial Distribution*, we have a vehicle that benefits students, educators and employers in our quest to develop industrial distribution as the career of choice in the 21st century.

www.industrialcareerspathway.org

ICP Advisory Committee

The ICP Advisory Committee was established to assist in planning and development of the ICP initiative and to advise on program components. The advisory committee has already begun to address key initiative components, such as continuity and flexibility of curriculum; Alliance Partner ownership and involvement; prioritization of key items within the initiative; and expansion of the initiative outreach and awareness including the ICP web site.

We thank the following industry, academic and association professionals who have volunteered their time and resources in helping manage the work of the ICP program.

ICP Advisory Committee Members

Chair: *William A. Childers, Rexnord LLC*

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Elements of Industrial Distribution:

For the past five years, Industrial Careers Pathway® (ICP) has been developing a pipeline of employees into industrial distribution to fill the shortage of qualified, interested candidates for crucial inside sales positions. The cornerstone of this initiative has been a pilot project working with community and technical colleges in offering industrial distribution courses. There are now eight colleges across the United States and Canada involved in the initiative.

Each college developed its ID program somewhat differently, but an introductory course has been a consistent offering at each school. Most of the pilot partners that have developed a certificate or degree program in industrial distribution incorporate other course offerings such as finance, marketing and technology.

Elements of Industrial Distribution is the first educational product offering of ICP. Until this point, there were growing concerns about a lack of continuity across courses and the lack of a core curriculum addressing the skills and knowledge needs as identified in a job skills analysis for inside sales. *Elements of Industrial Distribution* makes it easier for colleges to include an industrial distribution course, either as a core course in an ID program or as an elective or area of emphasis within another major. It provides a broad, comprehensive look at major aspects of industrial distribution, the role of industrial distributors, relationships with suppliers and end-users and the industrial distribution business model. The curriculum specifically targets either those with no prior experience in industrial distribution or those looking for a more comprehensive overview of industrial distribution.



Elements of Industrial Distribution is a complete curriculum for introducing industrial distribution. The curriculum is divided into four modules that each include approximately 20 lessons.

- Industrial Distribution Fundamentals Organizational Overview introduces students to the industrial distribution model, providing an overview of industrial distribution and manufacturing, supply chain basics, and value and value-added services.

A New Online Curriculum

- Industrial Distribution Functional Operations Overview is an overview of the operating and business components of industrial distribution, organizational structures, internal systems and quality control. This module addresses supply chain management, inventory, warehousing, enterprise resource planning, key sales functions and quality.
- Industrial Distribution Customer Service and Sales focuses on the industrial customer and their relationship with the industrial distributor; the interrelated sales, service and value roles assumed by industrial distribution sales staff; and important basics for effective industrial distribution sales. Students are introduced to adding value, the sales process, inside sales, outside sales, counter sales and technical sales.
- Industrial Distribution Marketing and Profitability begins with marketing to industrial customers, covers financial concepts of importance in distribution and looks at the factors that affect profitability including pricing. This module encompasses marketing and industrial distribution, profitability, margins and ratios, pricing factors, pricing methods, and discounts and incentives.

In addition to the lessons, the online curriculum includes pre- and post-tests for each module and a glossary of terms. The terms are highlighted in the text so the student can review the definitions as terms are used. The instructor can review each student's progress, time spent by the student online, and test results to identify areas where a student is struggling.

Elements of Industrial Distribution is maintained by Tooling University, which has an extensive library of online industrial and technological training programs and courses.

Although the online curriculum provides opportunity for instructor/student online interchanges, *Elements of Industrial Distribution* is not an online course, but rather is an online **curriculum** — or textbook with testing. An online **course** without a classroom component incorporates additional readings, exercises, structured interaction and dialogues with the instructor and other students. Several colleges are preparing to present an introductory course in industrial distribution with a fully online **course** using *Elements* as the curriculum. We expect that one or more online courses will be available through our academic partners by fall of 2009.

Within the next year, ICP will make the curriculum available to employers interested in using it as an orientation tool for new employees or interns. There are no plans currently to offer the curriculum to the general public.

Elements of Industrial Distribution is the first of two core courses developed by ICP. The next planned course is an applied product technology overview, exposing students to industrial distribution sectors, the major product lines and how they are used. Development of this second core course begins this fall and is expected to be completed by fall of 2009.

Industrial Careers Pathway® Alliance Partners

American Machine Tool Distributors' Association

ASA Education Foundation

Association for High Technology Distribution

Canadian Fluid Power Association

Canadian Plumbing and Heating Institute

Electrical Apparatus Service Association

Electro-Federation Canada

Fluid Power Distributors Association

Gases and Welding Distributors Association

*Heating, Airconditioning & Refrigeration
Distributors International*

Industrial Supply Association

International Association of Plastics Distributors

International Sanitary Supply Association

The Manufacturing Institute

*NAHAD—The Association for Hose and
Accessories Distribution*

National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors

National Fastener Distributors Association

National Fluid Power Association

NIBA—The Belting Association

*North American Horticultural Supply
Association*

Petroleum Equipment Institute

Power Transmission Distributors Association

Safety Equipment Distributors Association

Security Hardware Distributors Association

2008 Fund Drive Contributors

The PTDA Foundation thanks all of those that have contributed financially in 2008 (as of September 16, 2008).

149 individuals, companies and organizations have contributed a total of \$275,024.

97 individuals, companies and organizations have made leadership level gifts or pledges of \$1,000 or more.

16 individuals, companies and organizations have contributed to the fund drive for the first time or after a four-year lapse in support.

For an up-to-date list, visit www.ptda.org/ICP/FundDrive.



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