

THE JLF JOURNAL

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IMPROVING YOUR STRATEGIC VALUE:

Relationships between distributors and suppliers range from highly tactical to extremely strategic. A wise distributor constantly attempts to calibrate the relationship with each supplier and makes adjustments to the energy it applies to each relationship. Personnel at all levels of a distributorship must be able to describe the current relationship with its suppliers and simultaneously understand how the distributor is attempting to reshape the relationship in the future.

The grocery store challenge: While a distributor has a relationship with each of its suppliers, and a supplier has a relationship with each of its distributors, not all of those relationships are equal. Not all distributors agreements are of equal importance. Some relationships are merely tactical and others are strategic. What's the difference? A tactical relationship can help both partners generate revenue, but little else. A strategic relationship can help both partners accomplish greater and longer-term objectives.

The Two-Step Strengthener- Should a distributor decide to strengthen its strategic value to a supplier, it must proceed through two steps: First, it must determine what changes to make in order to become more strategically important. Second, it must draft a list of elements that it wants or expects from the supplier in the future. Never offer to do more for a supplier without simultaneously having a list of favors to

ask in return.

When applying extra energy to a supplier relationship, ensure that the supplier is aware of any added effort requested of him. In order to further develop a supplier relationship, energy must be applied by both the supplier and the distributor. Relationships where little or no energy is applied ultimately deteriorate and perish.

Take a minute and think about your key lines and what makes them so successful to your distributorship. I think you will find that you are following the path of a strategic relationship with that vendor in which you are growing your business. As a manufacturer's rep. we all want our vendors to have a strategic position at each of our distributors but that would be in a perfect world. At JLF, we are constantly adjusting our goals and our directions in an effort to align JLF & our vendors with a strategic relationship with each of our distributors. Try this evaluation the next time you sit down with one of your key vendors and see what direction he takes the conversation. I am sure you can only benefit from this experience.

School enrollment hits record

Total students enrolled in elementary and high school surpassed the record set in 1970 when baby boomers were of school age.

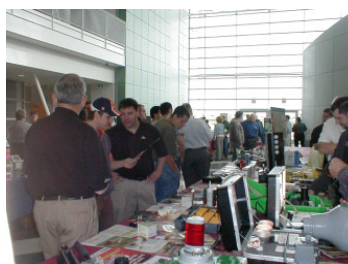
Total students
(in millions)

1970 48.7
2003 49.5



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

- Amy Kasser has accepted a new position at the Electric Association. We wish her well in her new position.
- The Electric Golf Club Golf outings:
 - July 19 at Silver Lakes, Orland Park
 - Aug 16 at Poplar Creek, Hoffman Estates
 - Sept 15 at Cog Hill, Lemont
 - Oct 13 at St. Andrew's, West Chicago



IAEI, IBEW, & NEMRA
Annual Trade Show
May 11th, 2005
Over 350 Attendees

Inside this issue:

Improving your strategic value

School Enrollment hits record

Making weight-loss wishes

New Plumbing Pal Book

U.S. cities with the worst commute

Product of the month at jlf



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