

INDUSTRY RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF DISTRIBUTION







Thomas & Joan Read Center

The Texas A&M Advantage

For 60 years the Industrial Distribution Program has been providing the industry with cutting-edge research solutions.



The Thomas and Joan Read Center for Distribution Research and Education is the only university distribution research center in the world. As a partner of the world-famous Texas A&M Industrial Distribution Program, the Read Center is responsible for creating and codifying knowledge for our undergraduate, graduate, and professional development students and industry partners seeking solutions that drive competitive advantage.

The Read Center has two research arms: The Global Supply Chain Laboratory (GSCL) and the Talent Incubator Program (TIP).

The GSCL consists of research professionals whose sole responsibility is to work on projects with our business partners. The GSCL has created a significant body of knowledge through these research projects and research consortia. A research consortium is a coordinated research effort between many best in class distributors all seeking to solve a set of similar problems. The GSCL has published its knowledge set through our alliance with the National Association of Wholesaler Distributors (NAW) the largest distribution association and a key partner to the Read Center.

The Talent Incubator Program consists of our top undergraduate researchers working on research projects with corporate sponsors under the guidance of full-time researchers. These projects often take on a "cutting edge" and innovative approach where companies explore new territory with young researchers who will constitute the future leaders in the field.

The Read Center leverages this body of knowledge to create open enrollment classes for distribution professionals to develop their skills. The Certificate in Distribution Professional Management (CDPM) is a prestigious NAW certificate program offered by the Read Center for high potential leadership candidates. The Read Center also offers programs for specialists such as our Intensive Inventory Program and Custom Programs built specifically for our industry partners based on assessment studies of their operations.

Simply put, the Read Center is the premier organization for the creation and dissemination of distribution knowledge for the present and the future.



Examples of Industrial Verticals We Work With



Sample Clients and Partners













































AVNET

















































JamesHardie



















































Industry Consortia

The Thomas and John Read Center establishes and runs Industry Consortia to conduct research in distribution topics and develop practical methodology and tools that can be used by the consortium members to improve their operations. These consortia involves collaborative research effort that brings multiple distribution and manufacturing firms and industry associations across diverse lines of trade together to solve an industry wide challenge.

Many companies cannot afford to invest in some research and development due to high cost and/or lack of knowledge; Industry Consortia are an economic path to low cost, high quality research and development that is essential to the growth of the company. A two day educational session is developed for each Consortia based on the resulting knowledge, methodology and tools.

	Year	Consortium Topics
(1)	2000	Information Systems Consortium
\$	2005	Pricing Optimization
	2007	Optimizing Distributor Profitability
+	2008	Texas Mexico Trade Corridor
0	2009	Sales and Marketing Optimization
%	2011	Optimizing Growth and Market Share
	2011	Optimizing Customer Service
	2012	Optimization Channel Compensation
	2014	Optimizing Human Capital Development
*	2015	Optimizing Value Add Services
	2015	Optimizing Data Analytics
**	2018	Small Distributor Consortium
<u>=</u>	2019	Digitizing the Sales Process
	2020	Optimizing Manufacturer Market Access Strategies

THE BENEFITS

- » Economical path to high quality research
- » Competitive head start to cutting edge best practices
- » Network with forward thinking distribution firms
- » Educate your work force on advance techniques and tools







THE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM PROCESS

APPLIED RESEARCH



INDIVIDUAL WORKSHOP





CURRENT CONSORTIA



Digitizing the Sales Process



Optimizing Manufacturer Market Access Strategies

RESULTS FROM PAST CONSORTIA















Global Supply Chain Lab

The Global Supply Chain Laboratory (GSCL) educates our students, creates cutting edge solutions for wholesale and industrial distribution channels, and provides answers to Distribution and Supply Chain Management challenges. The lab conducts research projects to solve distribution industry problems.

Project Areas



Customer Stratification



Inventory Stratification



Network Optimization



Optimizing Distributor Profitability



Pricing Optimization



Supplier Stratification

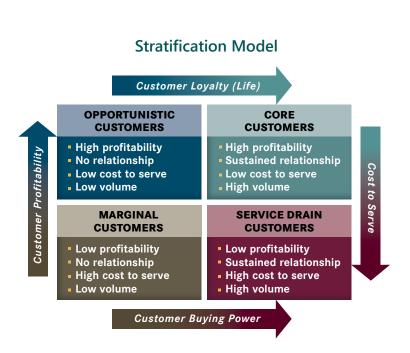
(Our Capabilities
	Applied Research and Proven Methods
	Actionable Results
	Industry-focused Education
	Better Value for Investment

+	Your Benefits	
	Gain Competitive Advantage	
	Improve Profitability	
	Maximize Asset Efficiency	
	Develop New Capabilities	

	Client - Line of Trade	Client Revenue	Project Outcome			
Project Area			Inventory Reduction / Re-deployment	Service Level Improvement	Operating Cost Reduction	Gross Margin Improvement
Optimizing	Wireless	\$ 1.2 Billion	Strategic Business Asse			•
Distributor	Building Materials	\$ 1 Billion	(similar to following projects) for optimal profitability.			
Profitability	Paper and Chemical	\$ 350 MM				
	Electrical and Industrial	\$ 175 MM				
	Chemical	\$ 200 MM				
nventory	Pipe, Valve and Fitting	\$ 1 Billion	12% 🚺	7% 🚹		
Stratification	Metals	\$ 1 Billion	17% 🚺			
	Oil and Gas Equipment	\$ 1 Billion	20% 🕞	6% 🚹		
	Paper	\$ 220 MM	10% 😉	3%		
	Hardware	\$ 125 MM	35% 🚺	3%		
	Fluid Power Products	\$ 125 MM	33% 🚺	8% 🚹		
	Building Materials	\$ 80 MM	22% 🚺	4% 🚹		
	Building Materials	\$ 1.2 Billion	24%			
	Chemical	\$ 125 MM	33%			
	Building Materials	\$ 120 MM	20% 🚺			
	HVAC	\$ 250 MM		5%		
letwork	Metals	\$ 1 Billion			15% 🕔	
Optimization	Building Materials	\$ 500 MM	20% 🚺	6%	10% 🕔	
	Auto Component	\$ 500 MM		33% 🚹		
	Automotive	\$ 4 Billion	The study identified str	ategic locations	for optimal distribu	ution network.
	Cutting Tool	\$ 300 MM				
Customer	Industrial	\$ 750 MM				2.9% (Projected) 🚹
Stratification	HVAC	\$ 500 MM				6.8%
AND/OR Pricing Optimization	Electronics	\$ 400 MM				1.2%
9 - p	Fluid Power Products	\$ 190 MM				3.1%
	Electrical	\$ 175 MM				2.7% (Projected)
	Outdoor Power Equipment	\$ 75 MM				1.5%
	Container	\$ 65 MM				3.4%
	Metals and Building Materials	\$ 50 MM	Implementation in progress and pilot location results range from 2 - 4% gross margin improvement.			e from 2 - 4%
	Building Materials	\$ 80 MM				
	Hardware	\$ 75 MM				
	Paper	\$ 100 MM				
	HVAC	\$ 80 MM				
	Building Materials	\$ 1 Billion				
	Industrial Automation	\$ 145 MM				
	Building Materials	\$ 120 MM				
	Building Materials	\$ 150 MM				
	Propane Equipment	\$ 40 MM				
	Gases and Welding	\$ 100 MM				
Supplier Stratification	HVAC	\$ 400 MM	Supplier Rationalization	and Preferred V	endor List Creatio	n
	Auto Component	\$ 250 MM	15% 🚺			

Customer Stratification

Facing gross margin pressure for many years, many distributors have turned to more scientific methods to understand which customer segments to deploy resources such as inventory and sales & marketing efforts. Customer stratifica-tion is a powerful tool that often determines at least half of the firm's profitability equation (Pricing). One of the most critical components of the customer stratification model is 'cost to serve'. Customer stratification is not only revenue-based, but also includes multiple factors like Buying Power, Profitability, Customer Loyalty, and Cost-to-Serve dimensions.



"Customer Stratification has the power to enable us to transform our company from being product-driven to customer-driven. It has helped us understand our customers in greater detail, enabling us to optimize our selling resources, which will result in an improved ROI."

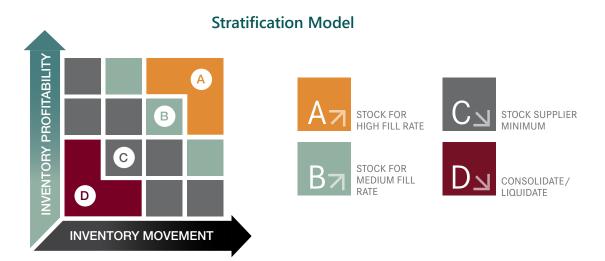
- Don Schalk, President and COO, C.H. Briggs Company

∙∰ CHALLENGES **SOLUTIONS BENEFITS** Multi Criteria Stratification Misaligned Sales Force Optimal Sales Force Buying Power Deployment Deployment > Profitability ➤ High Cost-to-Serve (CTS) Improved Net Margins > Loyalty High Customer Attrition High Customer Retention > Cost-to-Serve Underpricing or cost-plus Competitive Value Combination Customer pricing **Proposition** Stratification



Inventory Stratification

Inventory stratification evaluates existing inventory management policies and determine the optimal inventory stratification methodology as a first step towards establishing a structured inventory management model. The right inventory mix and optimized spend are critical success factors to create customer value while delivering optimal shareholder value.



"We collaborated with Texas A&M on an inventory stratification project which has resulted in a successful classification of our inventory based on item level profitability. We have already seen a significant reduction in capital employed and expect to benefit from further decreases."

- Kevin C. Reid, Vice President, ThyssenKrupp Materials, N. A.

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CHALLENGES

- Misaligned inventory investment
- Critical stock outs
- Excessive 'C' & 'D' inventory
- > SKU proliferation

SOLUTIONS

- ➤ Multi Criteria Stratification
 - → Profitability
 - → Logistics
 - → Criticality
 - > Custom criteria
- Combination Inventory Stratification

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BENEFITS

- Right-size inventory investments
- Manage item-level profitability
- Maximize your ROI on inventory
- Balance customer service
- Reduce obsolescence

Network Optimization

Design of supply chain networks is a highly strategic decision which could have a lasting effect on distributors' success. Several issues, such as unplanned organic growth, multiple sub-optimal facilities originated from mergers and acquisitions, long lead times and excessive inventory can lead to poor network configuration, resulting in high cost-to-serve and low customer service levels. A thorough analysis of facility locations and required inventory levels can lead to significant business insights and higher profitability.



Cubing Optimization



"Hats off to Texas A&M for taking common industry problems with complex components and developing scientific methodologies that are flexible enough to work for any company." - Jimmy Roark, Regional Sales Manager NOV Wilson

€ CHALLENGES

- Unplanned Organic Growth
- Multiple Facilities through M&A's
- Long Lead Times
- Excessive Inventory
- Competition Driven
- Ineffective Routing/
- Scheduling
- Poor Truck Capacity
- Utilization (loading or cubing) Market
- ➤ High Cost-to-Serve

SOLUTIONS

- Facility Network
 Optimization
- ➤ Hub and Spoke Design
- Service vs Cost Matrix

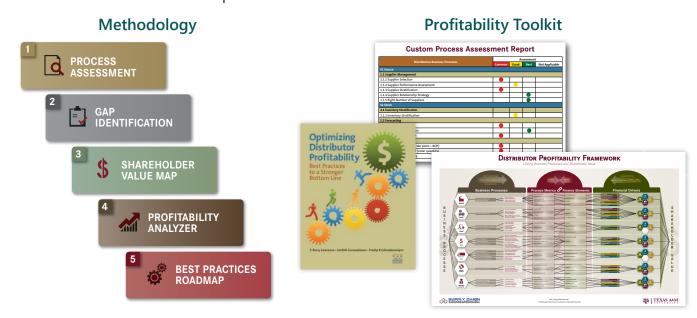
BENEFITS

- Facility Reduction/Expansion, Optimal Network Capacity, and Reduced Operating Expenses
- Optimal Network Configuration
- > Aligned Inventory Deployment
- Insight Into Service-cost Tradeoffs
- ➤ High Profitability
- Reduced Delivery Cost Per Order
- Increased Capacity Utilization



Optimizing Distributor Profitability

Wholesaler-distributors are confronted with increasingly difficult challenges. Rapidly changing customer expectations, increased margin pressure, more aggressive competition, ever-increasing IT modifications required to suit customer needs, and complex logistical problems are all forcing distributors to cut costs, better manage resources, and improve customer service. To address these challenges, it is imperative for distributors to apply best practices, but many do not gain the expected financial benefits. The source of these problems lies in establishing the connection between best practices and shareholder value.



"Delivered the tools we can use to optimize shareholder value. A picture is worth 1,000 words and A&M's Distributor Profitability Framework chart is worth 100,000 words!" - Ron Cedruly, CFO, Henrietta Building Supplies



Pricing Optimization

Distributors have been facing gross margin pressure for many years. The real issue is profitability threatened by customer price pressure (the upper boundary of the margin) and a declining ability to reduce cost of goods sold, To combat this, many distributors have turned to scientific pricing methods. Pricing decisions are very complex and, when made in information vacuum will sub-optimize gross margins for the firm and leave "money on the table". A scientific pricing analysis by taking a holistic rule-based approach to set and manage prices based on business conditions and customer intelligence will enhance profitability for distributors.

Pricing Framework 3 2 **ANALYTICS OPTIMIZATION EXECUTION CUSTOMER AND PRICING RULES** WHAT-IF **ITEM ANALYSIS ENGINE ANALYSES** • Recent price/margin Potential GM\$ improvement · Customer stratification · Item stratification Recent cost System aided decision-making · Customer's item visibility • Customer max price/margin Augmenting Factors Item unit cost level Group max price/margin - New Customer • Customer-item GM level • Overall max price/margin - Competitor price, etc.

"The Pricing Optimization program really opened my eyes to a holistic approach to pricing strategy. This program is about more than just pricing—it makes you consider the cost-to-serve, which products to sell, and how to use your resources to build more core customers, serve them better, and be more profitable doing it."

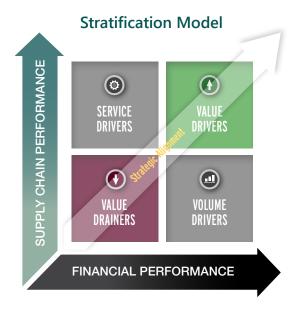
- Duane Van Dyke, Womack Machine Supply Co.





Supplier Stratification

The capability and survival of a distributor depends on the suppliers and their relationships. Suppliers are the beginning of an offering that distinguishes each distributor in the marketplace. In order to be successful, distributors need to understand the criticality of the supplier base and allocate key resources accordingly by performing Supplier Stratification. Supplier stratification helps to develop relationships and improve profitability in the long run.



"Linking customer stratification to our supplier and inventory systems empowers our team to quickly distill the variables affecting risk and reward so they can make better and more profitable business decisions."

- Frank Flynn, President, Sager Electronics

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CHALLENGES

- Sub-optimal Channel Investment
- Misaligned Channel Compensation
- Subjective Performance Analysis
- ➤ Lack of Channel Loyalty

SOLUTIONS

- ➤ Multi Criteria Stratification
 - Supply Chain Performance
 - > Financial Performance
 - Strategic Alignment
- Combination Supplier Stratification

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BENEFITS

- Analytics Driven Process
- Aligned Channel Profitability
- Improved Customer Service
- Focused Channel Investment
- Optimal Channel Proposition



The **Talent Incubator Program** is an undergraduate research organization that embodies the synthesis of industry and academics. Every fall, Texas A&M's most promising Industrial Distribution majors are hired directly by major industries to work on research projects located on the cutting edge of the science of industrial distribution.

For nine months in the fall and following spring, students are paid to complete an extended internship, which is often followed by a professional internship or even full-time employment by their corporate sponsors.

The Talent Incubator has matched more than 190 promising students with over 55 industrial sponsors, to produce more than 100 completed projects. Students have the unique opportunity to participate in research on the frontier of the logistical, managerial, marketing, and customer service sciences, and businesses benefit from the research and talent produced.



"The Talent Incubator Program is a real-world learning experience that integrates education, promotes values, expands individual capacities and creates the leaders of the future."

- Dr. Esther Rodriguez Silva, Director, Talent Incubator Program

Talent Incubator Program

Focus Areas



Customer Experience



Digital Strategies and E-Platform



Disruptive Innovation



Market Intelligence and Growth



Operations and Supply Chain



Pricing and Finance



Sales



Business Development



Strategy



Supplier and Channel Management



What We Do



Identify key industry challenges and develop project scope





Engage top students, industry members, and researchers





Develop students' skills and provide industry exposure





Integrate innovative knowledge and real world experience





Recruit young talent for internships and full-time

The Process





TIP International

The Talent Incubator also conducts multiple international programs. Between international research, exchange programs, internships, and conferences; the Talent Incubator provides students with a wealth of opportunities to develop their technical skills while simultaneously enjoying the benefits of interaction with a different culture. In today's globalization world, cultural communication can be just as vital to achieving success as technical proficiency.

International Opportunity	Location
Research	Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Mexico, Singapore, UK, China
Exchange Programs	Mexico, France, Brazil
Internships	United Kingdom, China
Conferences and Fairs	Electronica Fair-Germany





Benefits For Students

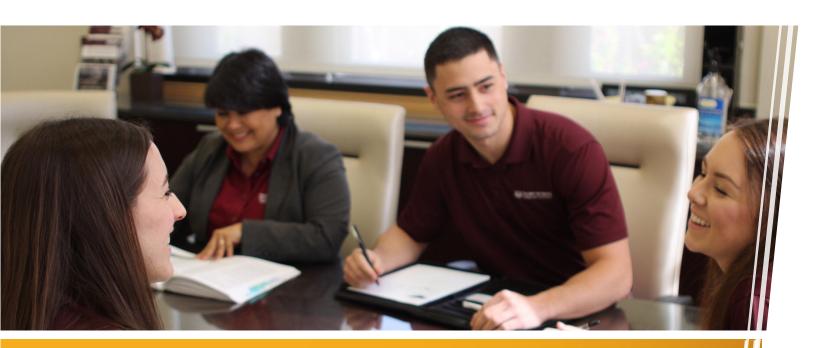
Perform research in an area of your interest

Develop critical project and time management skills

Apply concepts and theory just learned in class to a practical project environment

Gain an edge over competition on the job market

Secure foundation for future success



"The Talent Incubator was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in college. I gained a wealth of knowledge in project management, business analysis and professionalism, to only name a few. What I learned in the Talent Incubator has already and will continue to benefit me in the classroom, with internships, and lastly with full time positions in the industry."

- Scott Starwalt '15, Account Manager at Texas AirSystems

"The Talent Incubator Program is so valuable because -it gives us experience with a real company implementing the ideas we learn in class; the projects challenge us to go far beyond the average student's experience and knowledge. The atmosphere allows us to share thoughts with our peers and industry executives and help develop into more informed, well-rounded students."

- Parker Peelen '17, Analyst at FP&A



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Benefits For Sponsors

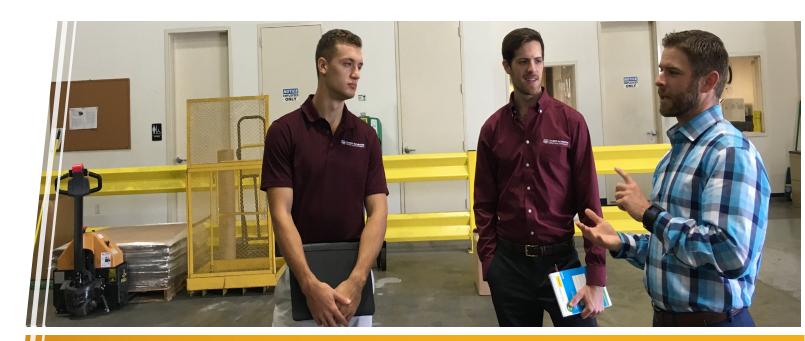
Employ teams composed of top students, faculty, and researchers to gain access to new and innovative ideas

Discover and share best practices

Cultivate a team that is knowledgable about your company's practices

Access a pipeline of skilled, motivated potential employees

Spread awareness throguhout the Industrial Distribution Program



"Students get to deal with real challenges, real issues that we are facing for the future, so they learn about the companies, about the industries and about problem solving."

- Mike Rowlett, CEO, Womack Machine Supply

"With the skills the students are developing, you are creating the merit employees really value"
-David Bradshaw, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer Memorial Hermann

"The students have given us an opportunity to get in really deep and get a fresh perspective.

It really helped us pause and look at our business."

- Jake Gress, VP Marketing L&W Supply

"The Talent Incubator is a phenomenal tool for us to really define our strategies"
- Gus Backer, Strategic and Financial Planning, Senior Director, L&W Supply



Customer Experience

Projects in this area attempt to enhance the quality of customer services, as well as to give companies a detailed picture of their customer base's characteristics and the determinants of their purchasing decisions. This data can be used to retain past customers, as well as to attract new ones.

(Scope	
	Customer Service Process	Elements of Customer Purchasing Decisions
	Sales Process	Product Presentation
	Customer Stratification and Profiling	Customer Service Metrics

How It's Done

- Review of Previous and Current Customer Surveys
- Mapping and Evaluation of Sales Leads
- Analysis of Customer Segmentation Data
- Meetings with Sales and Customer Support Staff

🛨 Takeaways

- > Improved Sales Process
- > Improved Customer Loyalty
- Successful Implementation of Customer-Oriented Technology
- > Growth through Increased Sales
- > Improved Customer Service Metrics





Digital Strategies and E-Platform

Projects focus on developing or improving digital marketplaces, training programs, inventory, or customer service interfaces. Projects also help companies expand into new digital marketplaces.

(Scope	
	Product Standardization	Advertising and Marketing
	Digital Sales Methods	Implementation of New Technology
	Digital Lead Generation	Web Sales Conversion Rate

How It's Done

- Mapping and Evaluation of Digital Processes
- > Analysis of Web Conversion
- Pricing Evaluation
- > Research of Competitive Landscape
- > ID of Digital Service Bottleneck

- Uniformity in Digital Presentation, Pricing, and Purchasing
- Improved Customer and Client Experience
- > Improved Web Services
- > Improved Digital Sales Growth





Disruptive Innovation

Projects of this category will assist companies in making wise investments and making the most of new ideas and technologies. With a focus on improving the research process, as well as minimizing risks from investment, these projects will provide companies with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in a rapidly innovating business environment.

Scope Scope				
Risk Reduction	Virtual Labs			
Internet Platforms	Business Intelligence Analytics			
Integrated Systems	Innovative Materials/Tools/Methods			
Social Media	Employee Training Needs and Opportunities			

How It's Done

- Identification of New Opportunities and Practices
- Identification of Potential Customers
- Evaluation of Current Industry Dynamics
- Creation of Case Studies

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- Access to Innovative Knowledge
- Competitive Edge in Emerging Markets
- > New Products and Services
- > Knowledgable Employees





Market Intelligence and Growth

Projects in this area are intended to gain a greater understanding of markets and how they can be utilized with the proper methods to the advantage of sponsors. Given the unpredictable nature of market positions, projects and their associated recommendations may concern aggressive activities like expansion, or more conservative tactics such as maintenance and upgrading.

Scope		
Market Trends	Identification of Opportunities for Expansion	
Competitor Practices	Lead Generation in New Markets	
Potential Customer Analysis and Stratification		

How It's Done

- Survey of Current Services
- Identification of Services Optimal for Growth
- Survey to Identify Customer Services
- > Analysis of Competitor Practices

- Lead Generation Tools
- > Knowledge of Customer Base
- Knowledge of Industry and Competitor Landscape
- Improved Growth





Operations and Supply Chain

Projects in this area aim to optimize warehouse operations and to discover more efficient models of distribution, inventory management, and warehouse placement. With adequate planning and optimization, companies can achieve space and operations efficiency. Stock processes such as replenishment are also be analyzed and optimized.

$\left(\begin{array}{c} \leftarrow \rightarrow \end{array} \right)$

Scope

Analysis of Product Volumes

Warehouse Location and Utilization

Cost and Benefits of Differing Supply Chain Strategies

Operating Costs

Fleet Utilization and Capacity

Stock Processes



How It's Done

- Warehouse Network and Market Analyses
- Development of Supply Chain Strategy
- Evaluation of Market and Supply Chain Dynamics
- > Evaluation of Fleet Efficiency
- Analysis of Historical Stock Data



- > Optimal Warehouse Location
- > Reduced Shipping costs
- > Increased Capacity Utilization
- Maintained or Improved Customer Service
- > More Efficient Replenishment
- > Risk Mitigation Policies





Pricing and Finance

As the Internet facilitates a shrinkage of time between an order and a delivery, companies must race to implement the newest pricing models that can manage the rapidly fluctuating trends of the market. Projects in this area attempt to offer companies the practices and knowledge necessary to optimize their pricing process and to exploit the benefits.



Scope

Historical Trends in Pricing

Shortcomings of Obsolete Pricing Software and Methods

Factors Affecting Pricing

Target Brands/Product Lines

Integration of New Pricing Techniques

Company Purchasing Power

How It's Done

- Analysis of Price Inflection Points
- Analysis of Historic Transaction Data
- Development of Multivariate Model (Will be Tested Against Historical Data)
- Principal Component Analysis (PCA) Used to Identify Most Significant Pricing Factors

± Takeaways

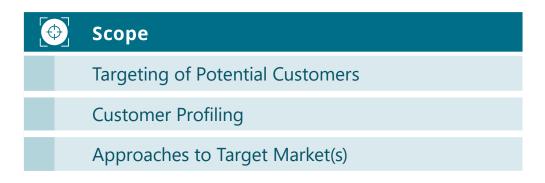
- Improved Pricing Practices
- Competitive Advantage in Financial Operations
- > Improved Bid Conversion Rates
- Increased Proft Margin
- > Accurate Price Prediction
- Planning for Responses to Changes in Pricing Trends





Business Development

Projects in this area are designed to help create and retain customer bases for new and smaller businesses, as well as to leverage customer targeting methods to increase sales and customer loyalty. As a result, these projects assist in the overall development of a business and help it to reach its full potential.



How It's Done

- > Feedback-driven Analysis
- Customers Surveys
- > Statistical Methods
- Comprehensive Assessments

- > Improved Net Margins
- > Optimal Sales Force Deployment
- > High Customer Retention
- Competitive Value Proposition





Sales

Unlike customer- or market-focused projects, Sales projects evaluate the effectiveness of sales forces, and attempt to improve employee efficiency, responsiveness, and lead generation. Projects specifically focus on the calling and other systems that generate sales leads, as well as the stratification of the resultant customers.



Scope

Overall Sales Force Performance

Individual Interactions between Sales Representatives and Customers

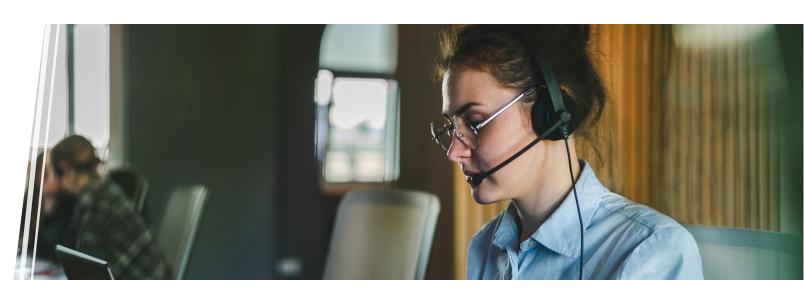
Current Sponsors Sales Metrics

How It's Done

- > Analyzing Current Customers
- Aggregating Market Information
- Customer Stratification by Typology
- > Development of Structured Cold-Calling System
- Strategies that Increase Lead **Conversion Ratio**



- > Improved Lead Generation Process
- > Alignment of Customer Needs and **Company Offerings**
- > Increased Lead Conversion Ratio
- More Proactive Sales Force
- Improved Sales Force Performance
- > Accurate Customer Categorization





Strategy

Strategy-based projects provide insight and recommendation for new business strategies before they are executed by companies. Additionally, these projects include actions for risk mitigation when commissioned by companies that seek to expand into new markets or make sizable new investments.

(Scope	
	Branch Financial Performance	Brands and Product Line
	Sales Process	Metrics of Performance
	Distributor Process	Implications of Current Market Share

How It's Done

- Assessment of Company Relationships
- Conduct Competitor Analyses
- ➤ Evaluate Market Growth Strategies
- > Identify Training Opportunities
- Generate Value Proposition for Stakeholders
- Interviews and Discussion with Top Management

🛨 Takeaways

- Comprehensive Long-Term Business Strategy
- > Improved Net Margins
- > Improved Overall Efficiency
- Plan of Action Based on Most Current Research
- Improved Position in Market Environment
- > Knowledgeable Employees





Supplier and Channel Management

Projects in this area seek to improve the working relationship between sponsors and their suppliers, often by researching new management techniques, along with logistical practices that promote efficiency and profitability for all components of the supply chain.

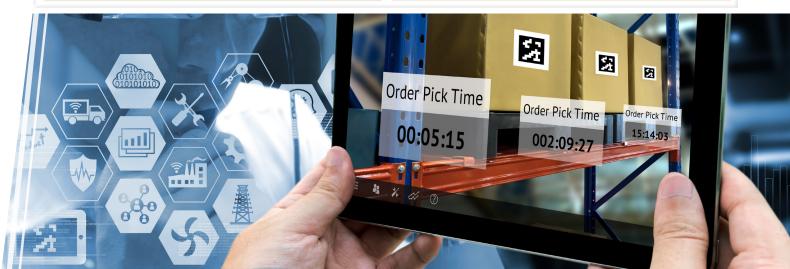
(Scope	
	Supplier Relationships	Inventory Management
	Determinants of Supplier Values	Channel and Supplier Practices
	Fleet Performance	Implementation Strategies

How It's Done

- Analysis of Supply Channels and Practices
- Communication with Company Suppliers
- > Creation of Supply Chain Models
- Assessment of Supplier Relationships
- Creation of Scorecards to Evaluate Supplier Network
- Generation of New Strategies for Channel Partners

***** Takeaways

- > Increased Supplier Growth
- Aligned Channel Profitability
- > Improved Supplier Relations
- Focused Channel Investment
- > Optimal Channel Proposition
- > Improved Growth



Professional Development

The Read Center works with industry leaders and their projects to discover new ways of productively and profitably servicing the needs of the marketplace. We help industry professionals recognize and improve their best practices and provide solutions and methodologies to facilitate a competitive advantage.

For more than 60 years, the Industrial Distribution Program has been providing the industry with cutting-edge professional development certificate programs. The Read Center offers 1.5 days to 5 days programs enabling high potential distribution professionals and executives to transform their company data to meaningful, actionable, and growth-driven results.

Our programs are structured based on duration, level of intensity and job functions. The program content goes through significant content changes each year in order to cater to the dynamic nature of various industries, lines of trade, and business cycles. We work closely with our industry partners and research teams, the Global Supply Chain Laboratory and Talent Incubator, to incorporate new bodies of knowledge (applied and proven best practices) to develop cutting edge and relevant content. Many attendees go through the same program multiple times over the years to keep themselves updated and educated on the continuously evolving best practices. Our teaching philosophy emphasizes three key aspects – BE UNIQUE in your industry (distinctive value proposition), GAIN competitive advantage (be ahead of your competition) and BE RELEVANT (maintaining sustainability and staying current). To help you choose a program we categorize our programs as short courses (1-2 days in duration), intensive programs (3-5 days) and custom programs (built specifically for your firm to meet specific training or process improvement needs).



Continued Education Programs





Branch Manager Training



Project Leadership



Distribution Professional Management



Intensive Customer Stratification



The New Science of Customer Service



Optimizing Channel Value



Optimizing Distributor Profitability



Distributor Strategic Planning



Intensive Inventory Management



Optimizing Business Analytics



Pricing Optimization

Custom Programs

Besides open enrollment programs, the Read Center offers customized Professional Development programs so your team can be trained to fit your company's specific needs. The Thomas and Joan Read Center becomes your strategic partner when we design a program for your organization. We develop a unique curriculum with action learning solutions that meet your specific goals. The process includes a strategic needs assessment, program design and course development, program implementation, instruction and evaluation, and program follow-up. The topics, faculty, program structure, and site are selected specifically to maximize learning and the effectiveness of the program for your organization.

The excellence of custom-design programs is based on outstanding faculty and an unparalleled level of service. Quality and customer benefits are key objectives for us and we constantly monitor program content and delivery. We provide complete program design, development, and implementation services. Any of the certificate programs offered for professional development can be taught as a Custom program.



We can help you in more ways than you could possibly imagine. Educational programs can be developed to fit specific needs of **YOUR** organization. Programs can be designed and delivered from 1 - 5 days at the Texas A&M Campus or any preferred location.

Professional Development

OUR PROCESS CONSISTS OF:

Advantage Through Customized Education

MEASURE

- > Evaluation and feedback
- Program effectiveness follow-up

> Understand challenges and pain points

Needs assessment





TAILOR A PROGRAM FOR YOUR FIRM



- > Present at Texas A&M campus or company preferred location
- Share real-world examples from various companies across multiple lines of trade
- > Determine key action items for attendees





- Visit business locations
- Meet with key stakeholders

DEVELOP



- Create content using company specific examples
- Review material and incorporate feedback with stakeholders
- Determine program duration

BENEFITS

- > Tailored program
- Delivered at any location
- > Research based material
- Proven methods
- > Actionable results

Branch Manager Training

It is an established fact that Branch Managers play a significant role in the success of any distribution business at the ground level. The decisions executed by the branch managers indirectly influence the financial performance of the company as a whole. The branch level is where the company's brilliance and strategy meet market reality. However, branch managers areoften unaware of this connection between their decision making and its financial implications. This results in failure of strategic policies implemented by the board of the company for growing stockholder value. One approach to bridge this decision making disconnect is to provide customized training to current branch managers demonstrating a well-structured link between their business process and its impacts on the financial elements.



Who Should Attend

- Branch Managers
- Operations Managers
- Sales Managers
- Potential candidtaes for management

Deliverables

- Optimizing Distributor Profitability Book and Frmaework Map
- Driving Profitable Growth Book and Framework Map
- > Slides as course booklet
- > Exercise and Activity Handbook
- Custom Branch Strategic Planning Handbook



Benefits

- Improve service levels and asset performance
- Understand essential elements of financial statements
- ➤ Understand how managing operations affect company/branch financials
- Understand Value Propisitions and their impact
- > Learn growth strategies and best practices

Project Leadership

The NAW Micro Degree in Project Leadership is a five-month hands-on, project-based, guided leadership development program. This breakthrough program is designed for high-potential leaders to help them develop the soft skills required to lead project management and successful implementation. Project leaders will take the skills they learn and apply them to their own projects at their companies during the five months. They will learn how to get buy-in for the project, manage different personalities, develop their leadership and implementation skills, and better identify their challenges. Support will be provided with check-ins no less than once a month by the Texas A&M subject matter expert, and may be more frequent if a project leader requires additional help.

This distribution-specific program begins with participants attending a three-day on-campus program at Texas A&M, followed by online guidance and project checkins as described above. Participants will again meet on campus for one day at the conclusion of the five-month program for project presentations.



Who Should Attend

- Operational leaders in functional areas
- District and Region Managers
- Branch and Sales Managers
- Potential candidates for management
- Inside Sales and Outside Sales Professionals
- Operation Managers

"I was able to garner a new perspective on my business and, more importantly, on how to improve the profitability of the business."

- David Ryan, General Manager, Polymershapes



- > Impact of operational decisions on profitability and shareholder value
- > Best practices in each of the functional areas of distribution
- > Dimensions of profitable growth in distribution
- Strategies to optimize pricing
- > Channel partner relationships and compensation
- > Strategies for sale force development and management
- > Strategies for talent acquisition, development and retention

Distribution Professional Management

The NAW Certificate in Distribution Professional Management is a breakthrough program that offers three separate, one-week, on-campus sessions: Optimizing Distributor Profitability, Generating and Managing Growth and Distributor Capability Development. These sessions are designed to help companies retain and develop their key employees. This is an ideal program for managers who seek to complement their professional development. While sessions may be taken individually, participants must attend all three sessions to earn their certificate.

The program consists of three one-week sessions targeted to distributors who desire an update on the latest knowledge in wholesale distribution, with a strong emphasis on practical application within the distribution field. The three sessions will provide an overview of the most important concepts in distribution today. The sessions will be delivered at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, through an active learning process consisting of both lecture and hands-on exercises. Completion of the three sessions will provide participants with the educational foundation they need to enhance their value to their company.



Who Should Attend

- Operational leaders in functional areas
- District and Region Managers
- Branch and Sales Managers
- Potential candidates for management
- ➤ Inside Sales and Outside Sales Professionals
- Operation Managers

"Excellent experience to learn, improve and manage processes to optimize profitability." -Ernesto Tovar, Sales & Operation Manager, HISCO



- > Impact of operational decisions on profitability and shareholder value
- > Best practices in each of the functional areas of distribution
- > Dimensions of profitable growth in distribution
- Strategies to optimize pricing
- > Channel partner relationships and compensation
- > Strategies for sale force development and management
- > Strategies for talent acquisition, development and retention

Intensive Customer Stratification

Best-in-class distributors categorize customers based on various factors, but customer stratification has long been an unexplored area for most distribution companies. Not anymore. Customer stratification is a critical business process that every distributor should adopt and execute well to achieve greater profitability. When you educate your staff about the customer stratification best practices, they will have the tools, knowledge, and motivation to establish and sustain this important business process. The program will demonstrate the customer stratification model; provide exposure to customer analytics, help you apply it to your company data and use for your company. You will get hands on experience analyzing customers, develop and apply a practical-best practice approach to cost-to-serve customers. The program will also help you understand the concept of "What to do?" and "How to do?" for applying customer stratification to various business decisions such as pricing, marketing, inventory management, sales force compensation, etc.



Who Should Attend

- Sales and Marketing Managers
- ➤ Business, Branch and Regional Managers
- Pricing Professionals and Business Analysts
- Marketing Professionals and Data Analysts
- Distribution Management Professionals
- Anyone who communicates or works with customers



Deliverables

- Slides as a course booklet
- Workbook for exercises and activities
- Customer Stratification Book
- ➤ Optimizing Distributor Profitability book
- Certificate plaque

"Customer Stratification has the power to enable us to transform our company from being product-driven to customer-driven. It has helped us understand our customers in greater detail, enabling us to optimize our selling resources, which will result in an improved ROI."

- Don Schalk, President and COO, C.H. Briggs Company



- Understand the differences of value between your customers
- Classify your customers with confidence
- Determine "cost-to-serve"
- Optimize sales force time investment
- > Increase your customer retention and revenue
- Maximize your gross margins systematically
- Leverage existing system information for better decisions
- ➤ Maximize ROI on sales resources and enhance customer service

The New Science of Customer Service

This session will help participants to efficiently increase service levels and customer satisfaction, while effectively locating and resolving customer service issues. The program will provide a methodology to capture more profitable sales from a growing loyal customer base. Service is a critical component of a distributor's value proposition. Even so, many distributors struggle to explain their service value and what defines excellent customer service. Since margin pressure continues to pressure distributor profitability, exceeding expectations by delivering a higher level of service than what is valued by the customer is difficult, if not impossible to sustain. Therefore, a thorough understanding throughout the entire organization is needed of the service requirements of the customer and the definition and components of customer service.



Who Should Attend

- Executive Management
- Business Development Managers
- Sales and Marketing, Customer Service Managers
- > Branch and Regional Managers
- Process Improvement Professionals
- Business Analytics Team
- Distribution Management Professionals



Deliverables

- > Slides as a course booklet
- Workbook for exercises and activity
- Customer Stratification book
- Certificate plaque

"We know the direction and changes we need to make to differentiate us from our competitors. Knowing and understanding our customers' expectations allowed us to quickly focus our attention on the areas we needed to improve immediately. It strengthened our customer service team and our ability to provide the service our customers expected."

-Darrell Johnson, VP Customer Service, Womack Machine Supply Company



- > Retain customers for life
- Gain a competitive advantage in customer service
- > Identify critical drivers of customer services
- > Determine service strategies for each customer type
- > Implement structured process for service recovery
- > Apply best practices to build a strong customer service customer culture
- > Strengthen brand and value proposition

Optimizing Channel Value

A great deal of pressure is being brought to bear on channel members. Continuous pricing pressure has driven many distributors to seek volume over specialization. Many customers go around distributors to directly negotiate with suppliers, and this puts the entire burden for compensating distributors on suppliers. This volume-driven mentality leads to a lack of focus on new product introductions and service innovations. The process leads to customers calling the shots on services and deciding what and how distributors should be paid. If the distributor is not compensated and is not partnering with the supplier correctly, the distributor will be forced to support those products where it can do the most volume. The process will lead to a weak customer relationship for the distributor and a high cost of new product introductions for the supplier (sales efforts and product failures). Thus, optimizing channel compensation has a direct impact on aligning three key resources (supplier—distributor—customer) of a supply chain which leads to successful and sustainable collaboration in the long term.



Who Should Attend

- C-Suite, Business Owners and Entrepreneurs
- Supplier Development Executives
- Marketing VPs and Directors
- Product Managers
- Business Development Managers

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Deliverables

- Slides as a course booklet
- Workbook for exercises and activity
- > Fundamentals of Industrial Distribution- the Sales Process book
- Optimizing Distributor Profitability book
- Certificate plaque

"Real world-examples with realistic framework made the content very rich. The program helped us generate specific ways to improve our channel compensation."

- National Channel manager, Electrical Distributor



- > Strengthen your channel relationship
- > Assess your channel health with our ready-to-use toolkit
- > Identify ideas and methods to optimize channel compensation and bottom line
- Gain insight into real-world case studies to see how successful firms manage supplier/alignment partnership

Optimizing Distributor Profitability

After many years of research by both firms and individuals, a "best" approach is now known for almost every imaginable distributor activity. Though each best practice and their projected impact on financial statements has been analyzed in isolation, no one has yet attempted to implement all relevant best practices and determine their effects on the firm's ROI and net profit. The perfect distributor would implement the most significant best practices, through the optimal deployment of their talent, inventory, cash, facilities, and equipment.

This program and the research behind it aim to help you become that perfect distributor—to see just how profitable a well-educated and well-equipped distributor can be.

Who Should Attend Strategic Business Managers Regional / Functional Heads Branch / Operations Managers Finance Managers / Controllers C-Suite, Business Owners, and Entrepreneurs Deliverables Slides as a course booklet Workbook for exercises and activity Best practices framework map Optimizing Distributor Profitability book Certificate plaque

"The information is organized very well, supported by robust research specifically on the distribution industry, presented in an easily digestible manner, and linked to real-world examples to help convert concepts into actionable items."

- David A. Larson, VP Operations, DW Distribution Inc.

👺 Benefits

- > Assess your business with our read-to-use toolkit
- ➤ Double your net profit and triple your return on net assets (potential identified and observed in our research study)
- Achieve stronger bottom line and improve cash flow
- > Communicate value of best practices to top management
- Obtain a road-map for successful best practice implementation

Distributor Strategic Planning

This program is designed to help distributors build competitive business strategies. The program combines past research conducted by the Read Center over the last decade. These research efforts exclusively focused on distributors across 25 lines of trade. The research efforts generated a diverse set of best practices that focus on key competencies. These competencies are distilled and packed into this three-day executive session. If you are planning to set your firm on a sustainable profitable growth journey while sharpening competitive advantage in your marketplace, this program provides you a blueprint to achieve the same. If you are not planning to grow your at firm above-average industry growth, this program content may not align with your strategic intent.



Who Should Attend

- Executive and Senior Management
- High Potential Candidates for Management
- Strategic Managers
- Regional Profit Center Heads
- Business Development Managers

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Deliverables

- Slides as a course booklet
- Optimizing Distributor Profitability book
- > Sales and Marketing Optimization book
- Customer Stratification book
- Pricing Optimization, process assessment workbooks and exercise booklet
- Growth framework maps
- Certificate plaque

"Today's competitive environment requires that management make better data-driven decisions. This program and the tools delivered in this session will map for you the process to make better, informed decisions. We can no longer afford to treat the sales process as an art; it requires a structured approach and this program will provide you with the tools to accomplish that in your organization."

- Joseph Nettemeyer, President and CEO, Valin Corporation



- Orient your firm towards profitable, sustainable growth
- > Develop innovative thought process to optimize profitability
- > Create a unique valued proposition for your company
- > Apply a structured analytical approach for competitiveness
- Make educated decisions based on shareholder value
- > Improve business performance with process-analytical capability
- > Enhance net profit and return on investment
- Utilize People-Process-Technology-Metrics for best practice implementation

Intensive Inventory Management

This program will help you transform your company data to meaningful, actionable results using inventory management best practices. This program deals with STOCK processes such as inventory stratification, forecasting and replenishment. Inventory stratification is the process of classifying items into a certain number of categories so that managing them day-to-day does not become unwieldy. The stratification process is usually not well-defined or given due importance, and it often gets oversimplified. When appropriately used, it can play a pivotal role in defining policies and procedures for other inventory management processes such as forecasting and replenishment. You will get hands on experience performing inventory stratification, analyzing demand patterns, applying various forecasting methods, evaluating forecast error to choose the best method, and deciding 'what to order?' and 'how much to order?'. After this program, you will be able to use the tool that you develop during this course to implement best practices right away.



"Through knowledge learned from the inventory management program, attended by all our management and key salespersons, we have reduced our total inventory levels by over 20%." -Brent A. Burns, Building Materials Distributor

Benefits Increase service level and inventory turns Identify new items to stock Reduce obsolescence and right-size inventory items Improve forecast accuracy through focused forecasting Optimize safety stock investment and item profitability Understand demand and supply variability Effectively redeploy slow-moving inventory

Optimizing Business Analytics

While the wholesaler-distribution industry is at an inflection point facing forces of change ranging from non-traditional competitors such as Amazon to workforce transformation from baby boomers to millennials to rapidly changing technology-driven customer buying behavior, data driven decision making has become one of the essential capability to business success. Developing an analytics capability, however, is easier said than done. Based on pioneering research into distributor-focused business analytics, this program provides executives insight into business analytics opportunities and capabilities and helps them apply it immediately to the development of their own analytics program.



Who Should Attend

- Analytics Advocates (CEO, CIO, CFO, C-level executives)
- Analytics Developers (CIO, Business Analytics/Intelligence Development Professionals)
- Analytics Users (Sales Managers, Purchasing Managers, Operations Managers, Business Function Managers)

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Deliverables

- Slides as a course booklet
- > Workbook for exercises and activity
- > Fundamentals of Industrial Distribution- the Sales Process book
- ➤ Optimizing Distributor Profitability book
- Certificate plaque



- > Understand key challenges in implementing business analytics and best practices to overcome those challenges
- > Assess analytic capabilities of their organization
- > Determine analytics applications and related business opportunities
- > Quantify ROI implications for strategic investments in analytical capabilities
- > Develop road-map for optimizing shareholder value through analysis

Pricing Optimization

The issue of margin erosion will never end if distributors do not get creative, both with their pricing methods, and with their value proposition. Issues involving pricing methods are more critical to profitability and so should be tackled right away. For many distributors, pricing decisions are delegated to individual salespeople to do in their own way, but pricing is already quite complex, and inconsistency will only increase complexity and will lead to chaos. The solution to this dilemma lies in "complexity management"—providing structure with fewer variables, and consistency.



Who Should Attend

Deliverables

- Sales and Branch Managers
- Customer Service Personnel
- Pricing and Purchasing Professionals
- Executives and Strategic Managers
- Business Analysts and IT Managers

- Slides as a course booklet
- Workbook for exercises and activity
- Pricing Optimization Book
- > Customer Stratification Book
- Certificate

"The pricing optimization program has been an invaluable tool for highlighting opportunities to improve margins. Implementing the principles in a pilot location raised gross margins by over 3% in less than a year. It has been an eye-opening experience for those salespeople using the cost-plus method for determining sales price."

- Kevin Martin, Vice President of Operations, Pipeline Packaging

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- Improve Margins by 150 basis points or more
- Identify key variables that must drive your pricing decisions
- Adopt a simple, practical, and scientific framework
- Utilize existing information in your system to increase margins
- Provide meaningful, concise information to your sales force
- Implement pricing best practices with minimal resources

INDUSTRY RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF DISTRIBUTION

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TALENT INCUBATOR **PROGRAM**

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