

# A League of Its Own

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**D**elivering first-rate service and quality products are cornerstones of good business. But in today's high-tech, corporate climate, a company often needs more than just a proven track record and a sales pitch to get its foot in the door and land a new account. After all, customers typically want the best bang for their buck, and there are plenty of companies competing for their business.

So how does an established distributorship continue to grow in an insecure economy and ever-changing marketplace? Ask Rick Wesley and he'll tell you about selling solutions with technology. "Our recent growth is primarily the result of our robust e-commerce solution," says Wesley, president of distributorship Workflow, which changed its name from SFI last November to better reflect the solutions it provides. "Because we offer national distribution connected in real time, we can now go head-on with the majors."

Wesley, a 33-year industry veteran, began working as a consultant for Workflow in the early 1990s after he sold his manufacturing company, Wesley Business Forms. Since then, he quickly has moved through Workflow's ranks--advancing from mergers and acquisitions consulting to national sales manager, then president. He also has been instrumental in promoting and selling iGetSmart—an online ordering system that simplifies the purchasing and distribution process—to end users. The system offers end-to-end services by streamlining supply chain management and fulfillment. Workflow is owned by Palm Beach, Fla.-based Workflow Management Inc.

## **Batting With Solutions**

Offering the iGetSmart online ordering system enables Workflow to be a "one-stop shop," Wesley says. "From fulfillment to printing to office supplies to warehousing to web site design--we deliver it all on one invoice." With real-time inventory and usage analysis, iGetSmart eliminates stock outs, backorders and rush jobs--doing away with the administrative burdens of acquisition, warehousing and sourcing, and thereby trimming administrative, storage and logistics costs.

Customers using the e-commerce solution also save money because Workflow's purchasing power allows them to draw from hundreds of vendors, making it possible to choose from a wide variety of products. Online catalogs are user-friendly, but policed to provide control and prevent order-entry and fulfillment errors. After a customer logs on, the system identifies a prearranged profile that confines the user to particular items,

quantities and budgetary constraints. Based on hierarchy and preset routing rules, iGetSmart will email the requisition to the appropriate manager for approval before sending it to one of Workflow's distribution centers for release. A League of Its Own Distributorship Workflow drives its growth through acquisitions and selling solutions with technology.

When a customer needs to have a job done "just-in-time," iGetSmart's print-on-demand capabilities offer immediate release and fulfillment--sending jobs directly to print. "We're selling solutions, but we're also selling what's best for our clients," says Senior Vice President Joseph D'Amore. "With our shopping cart format, real-time inventory and our print-on-demand capabilities, we really have come up with a winning model." Fully integrated with software such as CommerceOne, Oracle and PeopleSoft, the iGetSmart system also is fully backed by teams of Workflow accountants, customer service representatives, web specialists, management staff, warehouse personnel and logistics experts.

### **Loading the Bases**

After more than 75 years in business, Workflow has expanded to 43 sales offices and 10 distribution centers nationwide and fostered alliances in Europe and Asia for international distributive print-on-demand and fulfillment. "We've moved from adolescence to adulthood," Wesley says. "We're a large company now, and we're finally tuning up our engines." In keeping with its size, Workflow has become more decentralized and remains aggressive in selling to several vertical markets such as banking. It has large clients in North America and the Caribbean.

Although it has acquired 20 companies since 1991, the distributorship has shifted its focus to refining its internal systems during the last two years. "We're growing organically and consolidating our talents right now," Wesley says.

### **Scoring the Runs**

After its name change last November, Workflow launched a marketing campaign, "Business Revolution." The campaign promotes the company's one-stop-shop services to customers and prospects with brochures that feature an image inspired by The Beatles' Abbey Road album cover. The company expects to attract customers with promises of outsourcing their procurement functions and attacking their hard and soft costs.

"In today's business, outsourcing has won the high ground," Wesley says. "And it's overtaking the majors." With iGetSmart's all-in-one capabilities, Wesley expects Workflow to target Fortune 1000 companies and begin taking market share from Moore Wallace, Standard Register and Relizon, direct-selling manufacturers who dominate a large portion of the forms industry.

Over the last two years, Workflow has strengthened its national distribution capabilities with print-on-demand and custom kitting enhancements. It continues to upgrade the iGetSmart system and acquire companies that advance its product line, services, customer base and vertical markets. Workflow likely will continue growing and become a key leader in technology. “I see us forging ahead with custom solutions, e-commerce, multiple product lines and a consultative approach,” D’Amore says. “I see us giving customers a total solution that allows them to outsource all of the components in their non-core supply chain.”

### **Winning the Game**

The American Heart Association (AHA) partnered with Workflow because of its flexibility and creative solutions. “Out of all the RFPs we received, only Workflow’s offered us the solutions we were looking for,” says Herman Taylor, vice president of AHA. After 25 years of running its own print shop, the organization decided in 2001 to outsource procurement, production and fulfillment of all its printing to Workflow. “We just simply couldn’t keep up with our growing printing needs and the speed at which technology was changing,” Taylor explains.

As the country’s second largest non-profit organization, AHA needed a smooth transition, with minimal disruption to its nationwide affiliates who order print products daily. Workflow’s solution? Send in a team of printing production experts to manage the client’s former warehouse, implement the iGetSmart order entry and inventory management system, and utilize Workflow’s on-site fulfillment and customer service staff. “It was important for us to have a seamless platform online,” Taylor says. “Workflow’s technology made it easy and captured what we were looking for.”

Although Workflow prints mostly brochures for AHA, it also produces textbooks. With Workflow’s print-on-demand capabilities, what used to have to be ordered weeks in advance now takes just a few days. As a result, AHA has saved money because of reduced warehousing overhead. “Having real-time inventory has also saved us money,” Taylor points out. “Seeing pictures online makes things much more efficient and practical—it’s just great technology.”

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