

PTO Form 1830 (Rev 9/2007)

OMB No. 0651-0050 (Exp. 4/30/2009)

## Request for Reconsideration after Final Action

The table below presents the data as entered.

Input Field	Entered
SERIAL NUMBER	78841557
LAW OFFICE ASSIGNED	LAW OFFICE 109
MARK SECTION (no change)	
ARGUMENT(S)	
<p><b><u>THE APPRECIABLE NUMBER OF USERS OF APPLICANT'S GOODS ARE DO-IT-YOURSELF CONSUMERS, NOT MASTER MECHANICS</u></b></p> <p>Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Office's conclusion that the proposed mark MASTER PLUMBER is merely descriptive because it immediately conveys to consumers the intended users or purchasers of "ventilating ducts of metal, namely, dryer vents; plastic hoses for plumbing use, namely, washer hoses; plastic tubes for plumbing use, namely, plastic tubing for sink and washer discharge; non-metal ventilating ducts, namely, dryer vents."</p> <p>The proper test in determining whether a term is merely descriptive is to consider the term in relation to the goods for which registration is sought, the context in which the term is used or is intended to be used, and the possible significance that the term is likely to have on the <b>average purchaser</b> encountering the goods in the marketplace. <i>See In re Abcor Development Corp.</i>, 588 F.2d 811, 200 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1978); <i>In re Intelligent Instrumentation Inc.</i>, 40 USPQ2d 1792 (TTAB 1996); <i>In re Consolidated Cigar Co.</i>, 35 USPQ2d 1290 (TTAB 1995); <i>In re Pennzoil Products Co.</i>, 20 USPQ2d 1753 (TTAB 1991); <i>In re Engineering Systems Corp.</i>, 2 USPQ2d 1075 (TTAB 1986); and <i>In re Bright-Crest, Ltd.</i>, 204 USPQ 591 (TTAB 1979).</p> <p>To be held merely descriptive, a mark must identify "the group or class for whose use the</p>	

product was intended." See *Shaw-Barton, Inc. v. John Baumgarth Co.*, 313 F.2d 167, 169, 136 U.S.P.Q. 116 (7th Cir. 1963), cert. denied, 374 U.S. 831, 10 L. Ed. 2d 1054, 83 S. Ct. 1873, 137 U.S.P.Q. 913 (1963). For example, MOUNTAIN CAMPER for retail store services featuring outdoor equipment was held by the Board to be descriptive because the record demonstrated that an "appreciable number of items in its catalogue [were] obviously directed toward a mountain camper \* \* \*." *In re Camel Mfg. Co., Inc.*, 222 USPQ 1031 (TTAB 1984). By contrast, the "Manicurist" term in MANICURIST by CUTEX for nail polish was held by the Board not to be descriptive of the class of users of the goods because in the ordinary channels of trade the average consumer would find the mark "merely suggestive that the product would give professional results in the care of finger nails." *In re Chesebrough-Pond's Inc.*, 163 USPQ 244, 245 (TTAB 1969). The Board agreed with the Applicant's position that the average purchaser was a "do-it-yourself type" and not a professional manicurist. *Id.* at 244. Accordingly, the disclaimer requirement was overturned by the Board.

This matter is similar to the MANICURIST by CUTEX case. The Examining Attorney's position that MASTER PLUMBER describes the class of consumers to whom the goods are marketed simply defies the evidence of record and settled law of descriptiveness from the Board. As a factual matter, Applicant markets its products primarily to DIY (do it yourself) consumers. For example, the attached news articles state the following:

- ...the True Value Home Center, a **True Value** operation opened by his family to better serve the needs of **do-it-yourself homeowners**. Article 4 of 87 (or 4/87).
- Some of these co-ops that have historically focused on **DIY** home improvement retailers, such as Ace Hardware, Do it Best, and **True Value** (formerly TruServ). 7/87.
- works with a variety of home-improvement suppliers - Pittsburgh Paints, Raynor Garage Doors, **True Value Co.** - to provide visualization tools for the **do-it-yourself** type. 10/87.
- After listening to customer focus groups, **True Value** is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "**do-it-yourself** enthusiasts. 11/87.
- Calling themselves the Hardware Chicks, Treible and LaPointe, owners of **Paradise True Value** in Phoenix, dole out **do-it-yourself** plumbing advice everyday. 38/87.
- "**True Value** is strong in the **DIY** trade...40/87.
- Thousands of home products will be specially priced during the show, and the **True Value** Home Center will display many **do-it-yourself** ideas. 51/87.

- I was referred by the local **True Value Hardware**, a do-it-yourself gold mine in its own right, 51/87.
- [TruServ cooperative, made up of **True Value**] will be the largest and most efficient 100 percent member-owned cooperative in the \$140 billion **do-it-yourself** industry. 72/87.

See Exhibit B which contains numerous news and Internet-based articles referencing Applicant's target consumers.

Thus, contrary to the Trademark Office's position, Applicant does not market its products chiefly to master plumbers, plumbers, or any other type of licensed professional. In fact, Article 11 of 87 (Lexis) actually states that "**True Value is targeting do-it-yourself enthusiasts.**" See Exhibit B. Although "master plumbers" and "plumbers" could potentially use and purchase Applicant's products, these skilled professionals are not Applicant's target customers.

Furthermore, the evidence made of record by the Trademark Office merely supports the proposition that "plumbers" are knowledgeable about plumbing products. For instance, the news articles made of record by the Trademark Office reference the following:

- "Got a leak? Need to vent? Tap into Sherman Turner's 30 years of experience as a **master plumber** for the answers you need."
- "Ed Del Grande is a certified **master plumber** and the host of Ed the Plumber on DIY Network. Send plumbing questions to [dtheplumber@diynetwork.com](mailto:dtheplumber@diynetwork.com) or visit [DIYnetwork.com](http://DIYnetwork.com)..."
- "Assuming the toilet tank's water levels are correct and water is not flowing over the overflow tube, there are three possible contributors to the problems you describe, said **master plumber** Thomas McGuire..."
- "...Mr. Woodson, a **master plumber** and longtime gardener, says about sprinklers, soaker hoses, pumps, gravity distribution and drip systems."

The articles made of record by the Trademark Office do not in any way support the argument that an appreciable number of Applicant's customers are master plumbers. At best, they merely suggest that master plumbers are knowledgeable about plumbing matters. Thus, the term MASTER PLUMBER, used in connection with the goods listed in the application, is intended to suggest that Applicant's goods are of the quality used by a "master plumber," or use of Applicant's products can make the project look as though it was completed by a "master plumber." Thus, there is no evidence

in the record which supports a finding that the term "MASTER PLUMBER" refers to an appreciable number of Applicant's customers.

Additionally, Applicant notes that true "MASTER PLUMBERS" do not purchase professional plumbing supplies and equipment at neighborhood hardware stores. Professional, licensed plumbers typically purchase their tools from leading global innovators and manufacturers specializing in the needs of these *professional* users. For example, Rigid is one of these global innovators that manufacture tools, shop equipment and the like for professionals. See Exhibit A regarding information about Rigid and their target customers. Furthermore, HICO Group provides professional plumbing equipment that is purchased by licensed purchasers. See also Exhibit A. Thus, "master plumbers" are not the target customers of local, retail hardware stores.

The conclusion that the mark MASTER PLUMBER is suggestive of the quality of the goods completely squares with previous holdings by the Board on this issue as well as the evidence made of record. Therefore, the refusal to register Applicant's mark based on a finding that it merely describes the intended class of users should be withdrawn.

#### EVIDENCE SECTION

EVIDENCE FILE NAME(S)	
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<b>SIGNATORY'S NAME</b>	Danielle I. Mattessich
<b>SIGNATORY'S POSITION</b>	Attorney for Applicant
<b>DATE SIGNED</b>	10/01/2007

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CONCURRENT APPEAL NOTICE FILED	YES
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OMB No. 0651-0050 (Exp. 4/30/2009)

### Request for Reconsideration after Final Action

#### To the Commissioner for Trademarks:

Application serial no. **78841557** has been amended as follows:

#### ARGUMENT(S)

In response to the substantive refusal(s), please note the following:

#### THE APPRECIABLE NUMBER OF USERS OF APPLICANT'S GOODS ARE DO-IT-YOURSELF CONSUMERS, NOT MASTER MECHANICS

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Office's conclusion that the proposed mark MASTER PLUMBER is merely descriptive because it immediately conveys to consumers the intended users or purchasers of "ventilating ducts of metal, namely, dryer vents; plastic hoses for plumbing use, namely, washer hoses; plastic tubes for plumbing use, namely, plastic tubing for sink and washer discharge; non-metal ventilating ducts, namely, dryer vents."

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- After listening to customer focus groups, **True Value** is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "**do-it-yourself** enthusiasts. 11/87.

- Calling themselves the Hardware Chicks, Treible and LaPointe, owners of **Paradise True Value** in Phoenix, dole out **do-it-yourself** plumbing advice everyday. 38/87.
- "**True Value** is strong in the **DIY** trade...40/87.
- Thousands of home products will be specially priced during the show, and the **True Value** Home Center will display many **do-it-yourself** ideas. 51/87.
- I was referred by the local **True Value** Hardware, a do-it-yourself gold mine in its own right, 51/87.
- [TruServ cooperative, made up of **True Value**] will be the largest and most efficient 100 percent member-owned cooperative in the \$140 billion **do-it-yourself** industry. 72/87.

See Exhibit B which contains numerous news and Internet-based articles referencing Applicant's target consumers.

Thus, contrary to the Trademark Office's position, Applicant does not market its products chiefly to master plumbers, plumbers, or any other type of licensed professional. In fact, Article 11 of 87 (Lexis) actually states that "**True Value is targeting do-it-yourself enthusiasts.**" See Exhibit B. Although "master plumbers" and "plumbers" could potentially use and purchase Applicant's products, these skilled professionals are not Applicant's target customers.

Furthermore, the evidence made of record by the Trademark Office merely supports the proposition that "plumbers" are knowledgeable about plumbing products. For instance, the news articles made of record by the Trademark Office reference the following:

- "Got a leak? Need to **vent?** Tap into Sherman Turner's 30 years of experience as a **master plumber** for the answers you need."
- "Ed Del Grande is a certified **master plumber** and the host of Ed the Plumber on DIY Network. Send plumbing questions to dtheplumber@diynetwork.com or visit DIYnetwork..."
- "Assuming the toilet tank's water levels are correct and water is not flowing over the overflow **tube**, there are three possible contributors to the problems you describe, said **master plumber** Thomas McGuire..."
- "...Mr. Woodson, a **master plumber** and longtime gardener, says about sprinklers, soaker **hoses**, pumps, gravity distribution and drip systems."

The articles made of record by the Trademark Office do not in any way support the argument that an appreciable number of Applicant's customers are master plumbers. At best, they merely suggest

that master plumbers are knowledgeable about plumbing matters. Thus, the term MASTER PLUMBER, used in connection with the goods listed in the application, is intended to suggest that Applicant's goods are of the quality used by a "master plumber," or use of Applicant's products can make the project look as though it was completed by a "master plumber." Thus, there is no evidence in the record which supports a finding that the term "MASTER PLUMBER" refers to an appreciable number of Applicant's customers.

Additionally, Applicant notes that true "MASTER PLUMBERS" do not purchase professional plumbing supplies and equipment at neighborhood hardware stores. Professional, licensed plumbers typically purchase their tools from leading global innovators and manufacturers specializing in the needs of these *professional* users. For example, Rigid is one of these global innovators that manufacture tools, shop equipment and the like for professionals. See Exhibit A regarding information about Rigid and their target customers. Furthermore, HICO Group provides professional plumbing equipment that is purchased by licensed purchasers. See also Exhibit A. Thus, "master plumbers" are not the target customers of local, retail hardware stores.

The conclusion that the mark MASTER PLUMBER is suggestive of the quality of the goods completely squares with previous holdings by the Board on this issue as well as the evidence made of record. Therefore, the refusal to register Applicant's mark based on a finding that it merely describes the intended class of users should be withdrawn.

#### **EVIDENCE**

Evidence in the nature of Exhibits A and B, which include Internet and news articles has been attached.

#### **Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_001/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_-\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Plumber\\_Rigid\\_HICO.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_001/evi_64247209173-105240175_-_Exhibit_A_-_Plumber_Rigid_HICO.pdf)

#### **Converted PDF file(s) (6 pages)**

Evidence-1

Evidence-2

Evidence-3

Evidence-4

Evidence-5

Evidence-6

#### **Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_002/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Just\\_News\\_Articles.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_002/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Just_News_Articles.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (9 pages)**

Evidence-1

Evidence-2

Evidence-3

Evidence-4

Evidence-5

Evidence-6

Evidence-7

Evidence-8

Evidence-9

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_003/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_2.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_003/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_2.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (12 pages)**

Evidence-1

Evidence-2

Evidence-3

Evidence-4

Evidence-5

Evidence-6

Evidence-7

Evidence-8

Evidence-9

Evidence-10

Evidence-11

Evidence-12

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_004/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_3.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_004/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_3.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (12 pages)**

Evidence-1

Evidence-2

Evidence-3

Evidence-4

Evidence-5

Evidence-6

Evidence-7

Evidence-8

Evidence-9

Evidence-10

Evidence-11

Evidence-12

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_005/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_4.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_005/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_4.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (12 pages)**

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Evidence-7  
Evidence-8  
Evidence-9  
Evidence-10  
Evidence-11  
Evidence-12

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_006/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_5.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_006/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_5.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (12 pages)**

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Evidence-7  
Evidence-8  
Evidence-9  
Evidence-10  
Evidence-11  
Evidence-12

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_007/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_6\\_A.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_007/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_6_A.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (6 pages)**

Evidence-1  
Evidence-2  
Evidence-3  
Evidence-4  
Evidence-5  
Evidence-6

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_008/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_6\\_B.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_008/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_6_B.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (6 pages)**

Evidence-1  
Evidence-2  
Evidence-3  
Evidence-4  
Evidence-5  
Evidence-6

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_009/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_.\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_7\\_A.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_009/evi_64247209173-105240175_._Exhibit_A_-_Part_7_A.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s) (4 pages)**

Evidence-1  
Evidence-2

Evidence-3

Evidence-4

**Original PDF file:**

[http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010\\_010/evi\\_64247209173-105240175\\_Exhibit\\_A\\_-\\_Part\\_7\\_B.pdf](http://tgate/PDF/RFR/2007/10/01/20071001110106643563-78841557-010_010/evi_64247209173-105240175_Exhibit_A_-_Part_7_B.pdf)

**Converted PDF file(s)** (3 pages)

Evidence-1

Evidence-2

Evidence-3

**SIGNATURE(S)**

**Request for Reconsideration Signature**

Signature: /daniellemattessich/ Date: 10/01/2007

Signatory's Name: Danielle I. Mattessich

Signatory's Position: Attorney for Applicant

The signatory has confirmed that he/she is an attorney who is a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a U.S. state, which includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other federal territories and possessions; and he/she is currently the applicant's attorney or an associate thereof; and to the best of his/her knowledge, if prior to his/her appointment another U.S. attorney or a Canadian attorney/agent not currently associated with his/her company/firm previously represented the applicant in this matter: (1) the applicant has filed or is concurrently filing a signed revocation of or substitute power of attorney with the USPTO; (2) the USPTO has granted the request of the prior representative to withdraw; (3) the applicant has filed a power of attorney appointing him/her in this matter; or (4) the applicant's appointed U.S. attorney or Canadian attorney/agent has filed a power of attorney appointing him/her as an associate attorney in this matter.

The applicant is filing a Notice of Appeal in conjunction with this Request for Reconsideration.

Serial Number: 78841557

Internet Transmission Date: Mon Oct 01 11:01:06 EDT 2007

TEAS Stamp: USPTO/RFR-64.247.209.173-200710011101066

43563-78841557-4002cb694661e17e52389dea6

4ee6dff26-N/A-N/A-20071001105240175034



**EXHIBIT A**

**RIDGID**

PRODUCTS



SUPPORT



FORUM



WHERE TO BUY



Visitor Registration

Games

Sitemap

Privacy Policy

Legal

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News

Career Opportunities

RIDGID Merchandise

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**RIDGID POLL**What category of RIDGID  
Tools are you interested in?

Home &gt; Ridge Tool

## Your Success is our Business

Since 1923, RIDGID has remained the symbol of certainty to dedicated professionals of the expert trades. We at the Ridge Tool Company take this heritage seriously. This is why every tool that bears the RIDGID brand is engineered to the same high standards of quality, strength, and endurance as was that first heavy-duty pipe wrench more than 80 years ago.

Ever since the introduction of that revolutionary product, our expectations have been to exceed those of our customers through industry leading products and support that provide:

- Confidence that RIDGID products will consistently perform in the harsh demands of a professional's work site.
- Efficiency which results in faster work, more jobs, and improved profits.
- Industry innovations to help our customers create new services and income streams.



The RIDGID brand is a promise to our customers which we continue to honor every day. When selecting the tools on which to stake your reputation, know that professionals choose leader. The difference is distinct. The difference is RIDGID.

Why do so many professionals choose RIDGID tools? The answer is simple...trust. In RIDGID tools go to work every day in plants, on construction sites and in countless other environments.

These tools operate in extremes of heat and cold, withstand dirt and mud, and perform reliably day in and day out. RIDGID tools are known the world over as industry-leading products that allow professionals like you to complete jobs more quickly and reliably.



One of the design parameters for developing RIDGID tools is efficient operation. We ease-of-use into every product. And, we include innovative features to ensure that our machines get jobs done as quickly as possible without compromising quality.

Developing and manufacturing innovative products to meet the ever-changing demands of your job are a continuous process at Ridge Tool. Not only do our evolving technologies help you solve today's problems, they are designed to address your future needs as well.

As a dependable partner for working professionals, we listen to your



☐ Plumbing Tools

☐ Power Tools

☐ Woodworking Tools

☐ Other

**SUBMIT**

**RESULTS**

needs and encourage feedback. We then use that information to provide you with the equipment and support you've asked for.

The intuitive nature of our products helps you reduce your labor costs. For example, pipe and drain locating equipment is designed for high performance, yet simple operation. RIDGID, you spend less time training your employees and more time driving your business.

Even though selling tools is our business, we help you rely on fewer tools to get the job done. Efficient operation means more jobs, higher revenues and increased customer satisfaction. We are committed to introducing new ways to help you grow your business and prosper.

## Our People Make the Difference

The talented, committed employees of Ridge Tool share the common vision of making our company the best. Together, we strive for the best in quality, product innovations, technical support and customer service.

Throughout the world, our local teams of RIDGID customer service personnel provide the friendly, knowledgeable support that you need to keep working. This support helps you select, obtain and use the proper tools to get jobs done right.

Our training centers are available to help you get maximum productivity and service life from our products. We offer you custom, hands-on training by expert instructors.

In addition, our international network of RIDGID distribution centers ensures that you get the products you want, when and where you want them. These centers feature the latest chain logistic technologies so that our product stocking levels meet your delivery demands.



## Global Support

Local teams of customer service personnel around the world provide the support our end users and distributors need to keep them working. Friendly, knowledgeable and courteous support help them select, obtain and use the right tools to get the job done right as quickly as possible.

They also choose us for our international network of factory and independently owned, authorized service centers. Local support helps our customers get the maximum service life from their tools and equipment.

Global Locations	Manufacturing	Warehousing
<b>United States</b>		
Elyria, Ohio	•	•
Cambridge, Ohio	•	•
Erie, Pennsylvania	•	•
Orange, Virginia	•	•
<b>Europe</b>		
Leuven, Belgium	•	•
Gevelsberg, Germany	•	•
Sissach, Switzerland	•	•
<b>Australia</b>		
Campherfield, Victoria	•	•
<b>Asia</b>		
Kongawa Pref., Japan	•	•
Shanghai, China	•	•
<b>South America</b>		
Guarulhos SP, Brazil	•	•
<b>Latin America</b>		
Mexico City, Mexico	•	•

### Inside the United States:

- Schedule a Product Demonstration: 1.800.769.7743

- Contact Customer Service: 1.888.743.4333
- Contact Technical Service: 1.800.519.3456

**Outside the United States:**

- Contact: +1.440.323.5581

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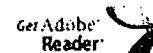
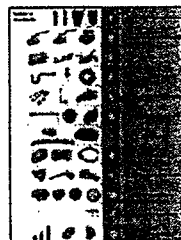
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### Plumbing Specialties Catalog by HICO Group Inc

HICO Flex Brass Co., Inc., has been serving plumbing professionals for over 40 years. We offer highly specialized manufacturing expertise for a wide variety of products from basins, check valves and flood control to showerheads and plumbing tools. Our extensive 107 page plumbing specialties catalog includes plumbing products from HICO Flex Brass Company and the Windy City Collection. Our newest plumbing specialty catalog divided into 12 sections. Each section has been provided as Adobe PDF documents below.



Adobe® Acrobat® Reader software is required to view the documents and is available on most operating systems. If you do not have this program installed on your computer, you may download it free of charge by clicking the image above.



**1** Basins / Check Valves / Flood Control



**2** Valves / Connectors / Water Supply



**3** Faucets



**4** Tubular / Flanges / Strainers



**5** Faucet / Toilet / Bathtub Repair



**6** Plumbing Tools / Specialties



**7** Appliance / HVAC



**8** Pipe Repair



**9** Shower Heads / Rods / Accessories



**10** Plugs / Covers / Grates



**11** Cast Iron Pipe / Fittings

**12** Fittings / Nipples



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-Web Design by: R & R Web Design

Specialty plumbing products by HICO Group, a plumbing manufacturer and importer.  
Chicago, Illinois based, HICO Group is comprised of Hico Flex Brass Company and CUCINA.

**EXHIBIT B**

1 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 Business Wire, Inc.  
Business Wire

June 7, 2007 Thursday 1:00 PM GMT

**LENGTH:** 441 words

**HEADLINE:** Analyse DIY Retailing In The United States

**DATELINE:** DUBLIN, Ireland

**BODY:**

...products by retail channel

-Which home improvement stores have consumers shopped most recently

-The Consumer-Attitudes and Opinions towards **DIY**

Companies Mentioned:

-Home Depot

-Lowe's

-Menards

-Wal-Mart

-Sears

-True Value

-Ace Hardware

-Do it Best

For more information, visit <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/c59140>

2 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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M2 Presswire



Research and Markets: Title: Analyse DIY Retailing In The United States M2 Presswire June 7, 2007

June 7, 2007

**LENGTH:** 512 words

**HEADLINE:** Research and Markets: Title: Analyse DIY Retailing In The United States

**BODY:**

...products by retail channel -Which home improvement stores have consumers shopped most recently -  
The Consumer-Attitudes and Opinions towards **DIY**

Companies Mentioned:

-Home Depot -Lowe's -Menards -Wal-Mart -Sears -**True Value** -Ace Hardware -Do it Best

For more information, visit <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/c59140>

**CONTACT:** ...

3 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2006 Business Wire, Inc.  
Business Wire

November 14, 2006 Tuesday 6:00 PM GMT

**LENGTH:** 473 words

**HEADLINE:** Research and Markets: Lowe's Inc Gets a Lift from Booming Housing Sector

**DATELINE:** DUBLIN, Ireland

**BODY:**

...players

Vendor alliances have been formed to introduce branded products

Sherwin-Williams

Constant innovation of products with a focus on **DIY(Do-it-yourself)** customers

**True Value**

Comprehensive line review program started

The company has placed a strong emphasis on modernizing the hardware stores

3.6 ...

4 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Sierra Star, Oakhurst, Calif., In Business column: Coldwell Banker has a new name Sierra Star (Oakhurst, California)  
July 21, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 Sierra Star (Oakhurst, California)  
Sierra Star (Oakhurst, California)

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune News Service

July 21, 2006 Friday

**SECTION: BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL NEWS**

**LENGTH:** 613 words

**HEADLINE:** Sierra Star, Oakhurst, Calif., In Business column: Coldwell Banker has a new name

**BYLINE:** Jenna Nielsen, Sierra Star, Oakhurst, Calif.

**BODY:**

...business, at age 17. In 1994, Bryant became the general manager of the True Value Home Center, a True Value operation opened by his family to better serve the needs of do-it-yourself homeowners.

After five successful years as manager, Bryant achieved the honor of being named National Retail Hardware Association ...

6 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2006 The Cincinnati Enquirer  
All Rights Reserved  
The Cincinnati Enquirer (Ohio)

April 8, 2006 Saturday Final Edition

**SECTION: HOMESTYLE; Pg. 2F**

**LENGTH:** 839 words

**HEADLINE:** TOP DRAWER

**BYLINE:** WITH JOY KRAFT

**BODY:**

...extra-thick walls of high density polyethylene plastic discourage their attempts to gnaw through the sides. \$24.97 at ACE and True Value hardware stores and [www.rubbermaid.com](http://www.rubbermaid.com).

DIY fame

A new HGTV show, "Look What I Did", which will premiere sometime this summer, is looking for quirky, imaginative ...

7 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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ASAP  
Copyright 2006 Hanley-Wood, Inc.  
Prosales

April 1, 2006

**SECTION:** Pg. 83(4) Vol. 18 No. 4 ISSN: 1055-3444

**LENGTH:** 2306 words

**HEADLINE:** Beyond buying power: in addition to leveraging volume purchases and distribution, cooperatives and buying groups help independent and small-chain dealers remain competitive with a variety of value-added services;  
Market Matters

**BYLINE:** Binsacca, Rich

**BODY:**

Some of these co-ops that have historically focused on **DIY** home improvement retailers, such as Ace Hardware, Do it Best, and **True Value**(formerly TruServ), have recently turned more of their attention to pro dealers to help combat big-box proliferation across the country. "The ...

8 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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Prosales

April 1, 2006

**SECTION:** Pg. 83(4) Vol. 18 No. 4 ISSN: 1055-3444

**LENGTH:** 2306 words

**HEADLINE:** Beyond buying power: in addition to leveraging volume purchases and distribution, cooperatives and buying groups help independent and small-chain dealers remain competitive with a variety of value-added services;

Beyond buying power: in addition to leveraging volume purchases and distribution, cooperatives and buying groups help independent and small-chain dealers remain competitive with a variety of value-add

Market Matters

**BYLINE:** Binsacca, Rich

**BODY:**

Some of these co-ops that have historically focused on **DIY** home improvement retailers, such as Ace Hardware, Do it Best, and **True Value**(formerly TruServ), have recently turned more of their attention to pro dealers to help combat big-box proliferation across the country. "The ...

9 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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ProSales

April 1, 2006

**LENGTH:** 2286 words

**HEADLINE:** Beyond Buying Power;

In addition to leveraging volume purchases and distribution, cooperatives and buying groups help independent and small-chain dealers remain competitive with a variety of value-added services.

**BYLINE:** Rich Binsacca

**BODY:**

Some of these co-ops that have historically focused on **DIY** home improvement retailers, such as Ace Hardware, Do it Best, and **True Value** (formerly TruServ), have recently turned more of their attention to pro dealers to help combat big-box proliferation across the country. "The ...

10 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2006 Newsday, Inc.

**Newsday**

Newsday (New York)

March 30, 2006 Thursday  
ALL EDITIONS

**SECTION:** HOME; Pg. 24

TECHNOLOGY; Like painting, but less messy Newsday (New York) March 30, 2006 Thursday

**LENGTH:** 490 words

**HEADLINE:** TECHNOLOGY;  
Like painting, but less messy

**BYLINE:** BY STEPHEN WILLIAMS. STAFF WRITER

**BODY:**

...based ei software Inc. works with a variety of home-improvement suppliers - Pittsburgh Paints, Raynor Garage Doors, **True Value Co.** - to provide visualization tools for the **do-it-yourself** type.

The company's Personal Color Viewer 2.0, \$10, which works with Mac and Windows PCs, was designed in conjunction with ...

11 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2006 The Houston Chronicle Publishing Company  
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The Houston Chronicle

March 28, 2006 Tuesday  
3 STAR EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. 6

**LENGTH:** 982 words

**HEADLINE:** Hammered by giants, True Value fights back;  
Restructured hardware chain tries to regain lost business

**BYLINE:** DAVE CARPENTER, Associated Press

**DATELINE:** CHICAGO

**BODY:**

...billions of dollars now spent annually on home upgrades, alterations and enhancements.

After listening to customer focus groups, **True Value** is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "**do-it-yourself** enthusiasts" who already account for an estimated 43 percent of its sales. The goal: to get them to come to True Value ...

12 of 87 DOCUMENTS

True Value Ready to Fight Big-Box Rivals Associated Press Online March 27, 2006 Monday 4:12 PM GMT

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Associated Press Online

March 27, 2006 Monday 4:12 PM GMT

**SECTION:** BUSINESS NEWS

**LENGTH:** 1004 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value Ready to Fight Big-Box Rivals

**BYLINE:** By DAVE CARPENTER, AP Business Writer

**DATETIME:** CHICAGO

**BODY:**

...now spent annually on home upgrades, alterations and enhancements.

After listening to customer focus groups for months, **True Value** is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "do-it-yourself enthusiasts" who already account for an estimated 43 percent of its sales. The goal: to get them to come to True Value ...

13 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2006 North Jersey Media Group Inc.,  
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The Record (Bergen County, NJ)

March 26, 2006 Sunday  
All Editions

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. B02

**LENGTH:** 968 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value trying to repair its image;  
Marketing push aims to narrow gap with rivals

**BYLINE:** By DAVE CARPENTER, Wire Services

**DATETIME:** CHICAGO

**BODY:**

...now spent annually on home upgrades, alterations and enhancements.

True Value trying to repair its image; Marketing push aims to narrow gap with rivals The Record (Bergen County, NJ)  
March 26, 2006 Sunday

After listening to customer focus groups for months, **True Value** is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "do-it-yourself enthusiasts," who already account for an estimated 43 percent of its sales. The goal: to get them to come to True Value ...

14 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2006 Associated Press  
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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

March 23, 2006 Thursday 5:01 AM GMT

**SECTION:** BUSINESS NEWS

**LENGTH:** 1004 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value ready to fight big-box rivals after clearing up financial woes

**BYLINE:** By DAVE CARPENTER, AP Business Writer

**DATeline:** CHICAGO

**BODY:**

...now spent annually on home upgrades, alterations and enhancements.

After listening to customer focus groups for months, **True Value** is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "do-it-yourself enthusiasts" who already account for an estimated 43 percent of its sales. The goal: to get them to come to True Value ...

23 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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San Antonio Express-News

Growth & imagination San Antonio Express-News September 12, 2005 Monday

September 12, 2005 Monday  
STATE&METRO Edition

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. 1E

**LENGTH:** 956 words

**HEADLINE:** Growth & imagination .

**BYLINE:** Aïssatou Sidimé, EXPRESS-NEWS BUSINESS WRITER

**BODY:**

...for his multipurpose tool, named the Ultimate Nut Driver, which is sold in several hardware stores, including Ace Hardware and **True Value**. Walker followed tips in the popular guide "Patent **It Yourself**" by attorney David Pressman, but also consulted extensively with patent examiners.

At one point, Walker mailed an ...

24 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2005 Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News  
Copyright 2005 San Antonio Express-News (Texas)  
San Antonio Express-News (Texas)

September 12, 2005, Monday

**KR-ACC-NO:** SN-PATENTS-20050912

**LENGTH:** 1090 words

**HEADLINE:** Inventors say patent obstacles stymie creativity

**BYLINE:** By Assatou Sidime

**BODY:**

...for his multipurpose tool, named the Ultimate Nut Driver, which is sold in several hardware stores, including Ace Hardware and **True Value**. Walker followed tips in the popular guide "Patent **It Yourself**" by attorney David Pressman, but also consulted extensively with patent examiners.

At one point, Walker mailed an ...

26 of 87 DOCUMENTS



Taylor Rental Store Opens in Cortland Rental Equipment Register August 1, 2005

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Rental Equipment Register

August 1, 2005

**SECTION:** INDUSTRY NEWS; Pg. 22 ISSN: 0034-4524

**LENGTH:** 144 words

**HEADLINE:** Taylor Rental Store Opens in Cortland

**BODY:**

...options at the same convenient location," said Trevor Berry, owner and operator of the new store, which serves contractors, homeowners, do-it-yourself enthusiasts and commercial customers with a range of rental equipment and tools.

**True Value Co.**, headquartered in Chicago, is one of the world's largest member-owned wholesale hardware cooperatives with \$2 billion ...

27 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2005 Madison Newspapers, Inc.  
The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin)

April 14, 2005 Thursday  
ALL EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. 1E

**LENGTH:** 1472 words

**HEADLINE:** MODEL NEIGHBORHOOD;  
ATWOOD-WILLIAMSON AREA HAS SOLID BASE IN PLACE

**BYLINE:** By Susan Troller The Capital Times

**GRAPHIC:**

...Customer service is a priority at the neighborhood stores, whether it's fix-it help from Steve and Tom Shepherd of Ace **True Value** (left) or do-it-yourself plumbing advice from Regan Howe (above left), who helps customer Jim Quinlan at Howe Brothers Plumbing.

Shoulder the burden of tools-on approach Courier Mail (Queensland, Australia) April 6, 2005 Wednesday

29 of 87 DOCUMENTS

30 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited  
Sunday Mail (SA)

June 20, 2004 Sunday

**SECTION:** SUPPLEMENT; Pg. H20

**LENGTH:** 75 words

**HEADLINE:** update & renovate advertising feature ;  
DIY by numbers

**BODY:**

...DIY Plasterboard Solutions include use of one or more of the five products for plaster repairs and renovations.

Products, tools and **DIY** sheets are at Mitre 10, **True Value**, Stratco, Home Hardware and Thrifty Link.

Details: Boral on 8240 8888.

31 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2003 Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News  
Copyright 2003 Atlanta Journal and Constitution  
Atlanta Journal and Constitution

November 13, 2003, Thursday

**KR-ACC-NO:** AT-HOME-DEPOT

**LENGTH:** 450 words

**HEADLINE:** 44th Atlanta-Area Store Signals Pause for Home Depot

**BYLINE:** By Tony Wilbert

**BODY:**

44th Atlanta-Area Store Signals Pause for Home Depot Atlanta Journal and Constitution November 13, 2003, Thursday

...analyst at Deutsche Bank Securities. Lowe's has 21 metro Atlanta stores and is expanding in the area. Ace Hardware and **True Value** also have large operations here.

"Atlanta has one of the highest concentrations of [do-it-yourself] stores in the country," Baker said. "All of this does point to fewer opportunities for new orange boxes, particularly in ...

32 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2003 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

**The Atlanta Journal-Constitution**  
ajc.com

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

November 13, 2003 Thursday Home Edition

**SECTION:** Business; Pg. 3G

**LENGTH:** 427 words

**HEADLINE:** 44th area store signals a pause for Home Depot

**BYLINE:** TONY WILBERT

**SOURCE:** AJC

**BODY:**

...analyst at Deutsche Bank Securities. Lowe's has 21 metro Atlanta stores and is expanding in the area. Ace Hardware and **True Value** also have large operations here.

"Atlanta has one of the highest concentrations of [do-it-yourself] stores in the country," Baker said. "All of this does point to fewer opportunities for new orange boxes, particularly in ...

33 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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Home Channel News

October 1, 2002

**SECTION:** Pg. 27 Vol. 28 No. 18 ISSN: 1538-7348

Dealers AIM to find the right mix: TruServ's Advanced Inventory Management program helps members evaluate what's selling and what's not; TruServ's supply chain management strategy;

**LENGTH:** 993 words

**HEADLINE:** Dealers AIM to find the right mix: TruServ's Advanced Inventory Management program helps members evaluate what's selling and what's not;  
TruServ's supply chain management strategy;  
Brief Article;  
Statistical Data Included

**BYLINE:** Girard, Lisa

**BODY:**

...category and determining what other items are necessary to be sold with that item. We ask ourselves, what does it take to complete a project for the do-it-yourself customer?"

Paul Giunta Jr., owner of Shore **True Value** in Somers Point, N.J., has used the AIM program since its inception, starting with the paint department and expanding it to plumbing, ...

34 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2002 Nationwide News Pty Limited  
Herbert River Express (Australia)

April 27, 2002, Saturday

**SECTION:** FEATURES; Pg. 4

**LENGTH:** 288 words

**HEADLINE:** Painting the easy way

**BODY:**

PAINTING inside the home is now one of the most popular do-it-yourself projects according to national hardware group **True Value** Hardware.

However, selecting the right colours is often a difficult and daunting task.

35 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2001 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.  
INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL (LANCASTER, PA.)

December 8, 2001, Saturday

**SECTION:** LIFESTYLE, Pg. C-5, WEEKEND PROJECTS

**LENGTH:** 1534 words

Bring back the beauty; Bathtub resurfacing growing in popularity INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL (LANCASTER, PA.)  
December 8, 2001, Saturday

**HEADLINE:** Bring back the beauty;  
Bathtub resurfacing growing in popularity

**BYLINE:** Roxanne McRoberts

**BODY:**

...veteran in the field of auto body repair and bath resurfacing.

According to Jere Steinbaecher, paint manager at Zimmerman's **True Value** Hardware Store, Hartman Bridge Road, Strasburg, one **do-it-yourself** porcelain resurfacing kit suggests ways to clean the surface using a muratic acid mixture, trisodium phosphate and steel ...

36 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2001 Micromedia Limited  
Canadian Business and Current Affairs  
Copyright 2001 Maclean Hunter Publishing Ltd.  
Hardware Merchandising

December, 2001

**SECTION:** v.113(8) D'01 pg 34,36; ISSN: 1199-2786

**CBCA-ACC-NO:** 5313720

**LENGTH:** 740 words

**HEADLINE:** The drill is gone

**BYLINE:** Gerlsbeck, Robert

**BODY:**

...services for the growing seniors population. Some stores already are doing it. At 2,300 square foot Humbertown **True Value** and Home Services in Toronto, **DIY**-befuddled customers are able to hire a professional to install what they have bought. For 13 years, the store has had subcontract arrangements with a ...

38 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2001 The Arizona Republic

SAVE MONEY BY TACKLING SIMPLER PLUMBING JOBS The Arizona Republic (Phoenix) October 13, 2001  
Saturday Final chaser Edition

All Rights Reserved  
The Arizona Republic (Phoenix)

October 13, 2001 Saturday Final chaser Edition

**SECTION:** AZ HOME; HOUSE CALL; Pg. 1A

**LENGTH:** 559 words

**HEADLINE:** SAVE MONEY BY TACKLING SIMPLER PLUMBING JOBS

**BYLINE:** By Rachel Davis Mersey, The Arizona Republic

**BODY:**

...It's an easy screw off,screw on."

Calling themselves the Hardware Chicks, Treible and LaPointe, owners ofParadise **True Value** in Phoenix, dole out do-it-yourself plumbing adviceeveryday.

"A homeowner can do so much themselves, they just need direction," LaPointesaid. "We'll talk them through ...

**GRAPHIC:**

Lisa Treible (left) and Shelly LaPointe, owners of Paradise **True Value** in Phoenix, advocate do-it-yourself maintenance.

39 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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National Home Center News

October 8, 2001

**SECTION:** Pg. 19 Vol. 27 No. 18

**LENGTH:** 671 words

**HEADLINE:** Steelling itself against an uncertain market;  
SteelWorks;  
Brief Article

**BYLINE:** NEVEN, TOM

**BODY:**

Steelling itself against an uncertain market; SteelWorks; Brief Article National Home Center News October 8, 2001

...small amounts of copper and brass. Its products are sold in 20,000 retail locations nationwide, including Home Depot, Lowe's, **True Value** and Ace Hardware. "They're mostly **DIY** products," Broderick said, "and 85 percent of what we distribute goes home in DIYers' cars."

The company uses independent contractors to ...

40 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2001 Gale Group, Inc.

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IAC (SM) PROMT (R)

Copyright 2001 Business News Publishing Co.

Paint & Coatings Industry

August 1, 2001

**SECTION:** Pg. 82 Vol. 17 No. 8

**LENGTH:** 2593 words

**HEADLINE:** Corporate Leader Profile: Duron Inc.

**BYLINE:** Maty, Joe

**BODY:**

...We'll be doing what we do best -- bringing in contractor business," Schwartzbeck says of the deal, which is seen as a complementary program in which **True Value** is seeking to boost its sales to professional users.

"**True Value** is strong in the **DIY** trade, and geographically is strong in the Midwest and West, while we're strong in the East," Schwartzbeck says. "We'll help them with ...

41 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2001 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Herbert River Express (Australia)

March 3, 2001, Saturday

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**LENGTH:** 560 words

**HEADLINE:** Handy hints for painting

**BODY:**

Handy hints for painting Herbert River Express (Australia) March 3, 2001, Saturday

PAINTING inside the home is now one of the most popular **do-it-yourself** projects according to national hardware group **True Value Hardware**.

With improvements in paint technology, the huge range of colours on offer and advice on how to use them, painting ...

43 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 Financial Times Information

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Global News Wire

Copyright 2000 The Gleaner

The Gleaner

November 21, 2000

**FT-ACC-NO:** A20001123D35-338-GNW

**LENGTH:** 295 words

**HEADLINE:** GREAT THINGS IN STORE AT H&L TRUE VALUE

**BODY:**

This promises to be the most exciting catalogue and is full of interesting and useful items for the home and other purposes.

The **do-it-yourself** workshops held at H&L **True Value** Superstore in Lane Plaza have been successful. Thus far, two sessions have been conducted:

- n Plumbing basics and

- n Decorative painting ...

...2001 and is scheduled for the third Saturday in each month starting at 10:30 a.m. Additionally, H&L **True Value** is in the process of putting together a **do-it-yourself** workshop club for its customers. Information about how to get involved is available at each outlet.

You may want to ...

44 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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Copyright 2000 Lebhar-Friedman, Inc.

National Home Center News



Touring the Windy City. National Home Center News August 7, 2000

August 7, 2000

**SECTION:** Pg. 26 Vol. 26 No. 15

**LENGTH:** 952 words

**HEADLINE:** Touring the Windy City.

**BODY:**

...blocks of each other

CHICAGO -- The Windy City is a great hardware and lumber town. It spawned Ace Hardware and **True Value** Hardware. It has eaten up and spat out more out-of-town **DIY** chains than any other market. (At one time, the now-defunct Builders Square had more than 25 stores in ...

45 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 Nationwide News Pty Limited  
The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

July 15, 2000, Saturday

**SECTION:** FEATURES; Pg. A20

**LENGTH:** 1314 words

**HEADLINE:** Coat of many colours - Do It Yourself

**BODY:**

...turn breaks down the paint faster.

How to paint yourself in

Painting inside the home is one of the most popular **do-it-yourself** projects, according to research by national hardware group **True Value** Hardware.

Improved paint technology, colours and access to advice on how to use them, makes it easier than ever before.

"Painting ...

46 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 New Mexican, Inc.  
Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

June 20, 2000 Tuesday

BUSINESS BEAT: LACK OF SIGN DOESN'T BOTHER LA BELL'S Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico) June 20,  
2000 TuesdayCorrection Appended

Correction Appended

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. D-1

**LENGTH:** 643 words

**HEADLINE:** BUSINESS BEAT: LACK OF SIGN DOESN'T BOTHER LA BELL'S

**BYLINE:** BOB QUICK

**BODY:**

...5 to 7 p.m. and then a sock hop from 7 to 10 p.m.

For more information, call 982-6760.

---

Do-It-Yourself Retailing magazine, an industry publication, recognized Big Jo's True Value Hardware on Siler Road in Santa Fe with an account of the business' profit-sharing program.

The magazine said ...

**CORRECTION-DATE:** June 22, 2000

**CORRECTION:**

Carl and Sandra's Physical Conditioning Center at DeVargas Center recently completed a 2,800 square-foot expansion. An item in Tuesday's Business Beat column misstated the size of the project.

48 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 Nationwide News Pty Limited  
The Advertiser

April 7, 2000, Friday

**SECTION:** FEATURES; Pg. 39

**LENGTH:** 657 words

**HEADLINE:** And now it's 'Ms Fix-it';  
The girls show they can take on the men-only DIY jobs at home

**BYLINE:** CHRIS OATEN

**BODY:**

...hammer are also getting the jobs done themselves.

And now it's 'Ms Fix-it'; The girls show they can take on the men-only DIY jobs at home The Advertiser April 7, 2000, Friday

"There is a growing trend for women to carry out a wide range of **DIY** jobs themselves," said **True Value** marketing manager David Hunt.

Mr Hunt said women were flocking to specialist hardware stores to get the right advice, as ...

49 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 Journal Sentinel Inc.  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin)

March 26, 2000 Sunday ALL EDITIONS

**SECTION:** REAL ESTATE; Pg. 9F

**LENGTH:** 265 words

**HEADLINE:** Tips help solve repair problems

**BYLINE:** Orange County Register

**BODY:**

Here are some tips for common **do-it-yourself** problems from the new " **True Value** Guide to Home Repair and Improvement" (Dell Publishing, \$13.95) by Jack Maguire:

-- If a screw in a door is ...

50 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 Orange County Register  
Orange County Register (California)

February 5, 2000 Saturday MORNING EDITION

**SECTION:** ACCENT; Pg. E04

**LENGTH:** 306 words

**HEADLINE:** AROUND HOME NOTES;  
Home repair guide is a True Value indeed

**BYLINE:** NICK HARDER, The Orange County Register

**BODY:**

New stuff: Those folks at **True Value** -- the hardware store people -- are coming out with a great new **do-it-yourself** book appropriately titled "**True Value** Guide to Home Repair and Improvement. "

AROUND HOME NOTES; Home repair guide is a True Value indeed Orange County Register (California) February 5, 2000 Saturday

It's filled with helpful specifics, but here are a few especially good features:

+ How to ...

51 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1999 The Times-Picayune Publishing Co.  
Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)

September 23, 1999 Thursday, KENNER

**SECTION:** PICAYUNE; Pg. 1D1

**LENGTH:** 202 words

**HEADLINE:** SAMPLE FOOD, SEE EXHIBITS AT HOME SHOW

**BYLINE:** Kenner bureau

**BODY:**

...Fair at the Pontchartrain Center, 4545 Williams Blvd.

Thousands of home products will be specially priced during the show, and the **True Value** Home Center will display many **do-it-yourself** ideas.

52 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1999 The Seattle Times Company  
The Seattle Times

August 08, 1999, Sunday Final Edition

**SECTION:** HOME, REAL ESTATE; Pg. F6; MR. HANDYPERSON

**LENGTH:** 662 words

**HEADLINE:** AT LAST, A SOURCE IS FOUND TO REPLACE ODDBALL HARDWARE

**BODY:**

...A can of WD-40 did most of the job, but some rollers and latches were broken. I was referred by the local **True Value** Hardware, a **do-it-yourself** gold mine in its own right, to an outfit called Blaine Door and Window in Stone Park, Ill. These ...

NASCAR ROLLS IN ROCK: YOUNG, URBAN SET EXPOSED TO RACING BRAND VIA CONCERT SERIES  
Advertising Age June 14, 1999

53 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1999 Crain Communications Inc.  
Advertising Age

June 14, 1999

**SECTION:** News; Pg. 30

**LENGTH:** 847 words

**HEADLINE:** NASCAR ROLLS IN ROCK: YOUNG, URBAN SET EXPOSED TO RACING BRAND  
VIA CONCERT SERIES

**BYLINE:** Kate Fitzgerald

**BODY:**

Co-sponsoring the tour are Gibson Musical Instruments, Quaker Oats Co.'s Gatorade, TruServ Corp.'s True Value Hardware Stores and upstart do-it-yourself car parts Internet site Wrenchhead.com. Each will provide hands-on activities for attendees.

Other ...

55 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1999 The Times-Picayune Publishing Co.  
Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)

February 25, 1999 Thursday, KENNER

**SECTION:** PICAYUNE; Pg. 6D1

**LENGTH:** 459 words

**HEADLINE:** LOCAL SHOW SETS UP HOUSE THIS WEEKEND

**BYLINE:** CINDY WOODERSON

**BODY:**

...many of  
your favorite brands, such as Frito-Lay, Pillsbury, Tony's Pizza, Zapp's,  
Borden's, Kraft and much more. Plus the True Value Home Center with  
do-it-yourself products will be on site throughout the show.

In addition, there will be cooking shows, prizes and giveaways worth

LOCAL SHOW SETS UP HOUSE THIS WEEKEND Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA) February 25, 1999  
Thursday, KENNER

thousands of ...

57 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1999 The Times-Picayune Publishing Co.  
Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)

February 21, 1999 Sunday, ALGIERS

**SECTION:** PICAYUNE; Pg. 10F1

**LENGTH:** 118 words

**HEADLINE:** HOME, FOOD SHOW KICKS OFF FRIDAY

**BYLINE:** Kenner bureau

**BODY:**

...baths, appliances, patios, spas, decks, flooring and more will be showcased. Also look for product sampling and cooking demonstrations, the True Value Home Center with do-it-yourself products and ideas, and children's exhibits from Rainbow Play Systems, Space Walk and Dorling Kindersley Family Learning.

58 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1999 UMI Inc.;  
Copyright American City Business Journals Inc. 1999;  
Business Dateline;  
Boston Business Journal

February 12, 1999

**SECTION:** Vol 19; No 1; pg 12

**LENGTH:** 785 words

**HEADLINE:** Child inventors discover a workplace more their size

**BYLINE:** Roberta Holland

**DATLINE:** Cambridge; MA; US; New England

**BODY:**

Child inventors discover a workplace more their size Boston Business Journal February 12, 1999

...It-Yourself has agreements on the local level with Tandy Corp.'s RadioShack, Pearl Art & Craft Supplies (nc. and **True Value** Hardware in Cambridge to promote **Build-It-Yourself** and display some of the inventions. In return, the BIY web site directs the kids to go to those stores to buy their supplies. The cost ...

**JOURNAL-CODE:** BBJ

59 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1998 Nationwide News Pty Limited  
ALBERT & LOGAN NEWS - FRIDAY

September 11, 1998, Friday

**LENGTH:** 180 words

**HEADLINE:** DIY TRADE FAIR

**BODY:**

...how to use them, while at the same time, taking advantage of in-store specials," he said.

Mr Briscoe said **True Value** Hardware research had shown more women were becoming interested in products and **DIY** projects and encouraged them to check out the latest products.

"We would like to encourage as many women as possible to take advantage of the new skills they ...

60 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1998 PR Newswire Association, Inc.  
PR Newswire

May 15, 1998, Friday

**SECTION:** Financial News

**DISTRIBUTION:** TO BUSINESS AND RETAILING EDITORS

**LENGTH:** 654 words

**HEADLINE:** Fur Balls, Friendly Parrots, Floral Bouquets and Fast Repairs -- True Stories Behind True Value's Reputation for Great Service  
**LEXIS-NEXIS Related Topics**no targeted Topics.

**DATeline:** DALLAS, May 15

Fur Balls, Friendly Parrots, Floral Bouquets and Fast Repairs -- True Stories Behind True Value's Reputation for Great Service  
LEXIS-NEXIS Related Topicsno targeted Topics. PR Newswire May 15, 1998

**BODY:**

...Members from big-box competitors, who are unable to deliver this type of friendly, personal service. The advertising will help keep **True Value** top-of-mind when consumers plan do-it-yourself home improvements projects.

61 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1997 CMP Information Ltd  
DIY Week

January 24, 1997

**SECTION:** Pg. 10

**LENGTH:** 178 words

**HEADLINE:** Storms hit US retailers

**BODY:**

...greenhouses at Peninsula Gardens gc in Gig Harbour collapsed under heavy snow, as did the roof of the Lake Chelan **True Value** diy store, which set up a temporary shop in another building.

\* The Eagle Hardware store in East Bremerton was also ...

62 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 Sentinel Communications Co.  
Orlando Sentinel (Florida)

December 16, 1996 Monday, METRO

**SECTION:** CENTRAL FLORIDA BUSINESS; Pg. 10

**LENGTH:** 883 words

**HEADLINE:** MERGER NOT WRENCHING FOR HARDWARE RETAILERS

**BYLINE:** Brad Kuhn of The Sentinel Staff

**BODY:**

A planned merger of **True Value** Hardware and ServiStar Coast to Coast do-it-yourself buying cooperatives is bound to create savings for the more than 10,500 independent member-retailers, analysts say.



MERGER NOT WRENCHING FOR HARDWARE RETAILERS Orlando Sentinel (Florida) December 16, 1996  
Monday, METRO

One unusual ...

63 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 Star-Telegram Newspaper, Inc.  
Fort Worth Star-Telegram (Texas)

December 12, 1996, Thursday FINAL AM EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. 2

**LENGTH:** 1180 words

**HEADLINE:** Business Digest

**BYLINE:** Wire Reports

**BODY:**

...third-largest airline.

Hardware wholesalers to merge  
PITTSBURGH - ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores.

The new company will be called TruServ Corp. and is expected to be a stronger competitor for expanding national ...

64 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 San Antonio Express-News  
San Antonio Express-News (Texas)

December 12, 1996, Thursday , ALAMO

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. 1, Part D

**LENGTH:** 134 words

**HEADLINE:** PITTSBURGH - ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler

PITTSBURGH - ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores.

BUSINESS TOPICS Sun-Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL) December 12, 1996, Thursday,

65 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 Sun-Sentinel Company  
Sun-Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)

December 12, 1996, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS, Pg. 3D, BUSINESS TOPICS

**LENGTH:** 744 words

**HEADLINE:** BUSINESS TOPICS

**BODY:**

...educational center and a youth recreation hall. **RETAIL** -- ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the **do-it-yourself** hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores.

The new company will be called TruServ Corp. and is expected to be a stronger competitor for expanding national ...

66 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 The Tribune Co. Publishes The Tampa Tribune Tampa Tribune  
(Florida)

December 12, 1996, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS & FINANCE, Pg. 5

**LENGTH:** 1091 words

**HEADLINE:** Sun rallies some corporate support

**BYLINE:** From Tribune staff and wire reports

**BODY:**

...qualify for it. **DEALS** Hardware suppliers to merge

ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the **do-it-yourself** hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores.

The new company will be called TruServ Corp. and is expected to be a stronger competitor for expanding national ...

67 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Hardware Firms Nail Merger Tulsa World (Oklahoma) December 12, 1996 Thursday

Copyright 1996 The Tulsa World  
Tulsa World (Oklahoma)

December 12, 1996 Thursday FINAL HOME EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. E1; FYI BUSINESS

**LENGTH:** 779 words

**HEADLINE:** Hardware Firms Nail Merger

**BYLINE:** From staff, wire reports

**BODY:**

ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores.

The new company will be called TruServ Corp. and is expected to be a stronger competitor for expanding national ...

68 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 Landmark Communications, Inc.  
The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)

December 12, 1996, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS, Pg. D3

**LENGTH:** 545 words

**HEADLINE:** DIGEST

**BODY:**

ServiStar will merge with **True Value** supplier ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores. The new company will be called TruServ Corp. and is expected to be a stronger competitor for expanding national ...

69 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 The News and Observer  
News and Observer (Raleigh, NC)

Briefs News and Observer (Raleigh, NC) December 11, 1996 Wednesday,

December 11, 1996 Wednesday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. D1; Business Briefs

**LENGTH:** 1769 words

**HEADLINE:** Briefs

**BODY:**

...###

True Value, ServiStar create co-operative:

CHICAGO - Cotter & Co., the largest wholesaler of hardware and related products to **True Value** stores, and ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself market, agreed to merge, the companies said Tuesday.

The merger of the two co-operatives will create a new co- ...

70 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 UMI Inc.;  
Copyright Tribune Review Publishing Co 1996;  
Business Dateline;  
Tribune Review-Greensburg PA

December 11, 1996

**SECTION:** pg B3

**LENGTH:** 840 words

**HEADLINE:** ServiStar merger means elimination of 314 Butler jobs

**BYLINE:** Ron DaParma

**DATELINE:** Butler; PA; US; Middle Atlantic

**BODY:**

...a Butler-based hardware, lumber and home improvement supply cooperative, is merging with Chicago-based Cotter & Co., which supplies **True Value** Hardware retailers and is the largest U.S. wholesaler in the "Do-It-Yourself" market.

Officials of the two companies said the merged firm, to be known as TruServe Corp., will be a stronger company that will be ...

71 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Two Hardware Suppliers To Merge December 11, 1996, Wednesday, BC cycle

Copyright 1996 Associated Press  
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The Associated Press

December 11, 1996, Wednesday, BC cycle

**SECTION:** Business News

**LENGTH:** 243 words

**HEADLINE:** Two Hardware Suppliers To Merge

**DATELINE:** PITTSBURGH

**BODY:**

ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third-largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself hardware market, has agreed to merge with the biggest supplier to **True Value** hardware stores.

The new company will be called TruServ Corp. and is expected to be a stronger competitor for expanding national ...

72 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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PR Newswire

December 10, 1996, Tuesday

**SECTION:** Financial News

**DISTRIBUTION:** TO BUSINESS EDITOR

**LENGTH:** 1649 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value and Servistar Coast to Coast Propose Merger of Wholesalers; New \$4.5 Billion Cooperative to be Largest in the World

**DATELINE:** CHICAGO, Dec. 10

**BODY:**

The boards of directors of Cotter & Company, the world's largest wholesaler of hardware and related products to **True Value** retailers, and ServiStar Coast to Coast Corp., the third largest wholesaler in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) market, have agreed to merge the two companies. The merger will create a new co-op called TruServ ...

True Value and Servistar Coast to Coast Propose Merger of Wholesalers; New \$4.5 Billion Cooperative to be Largest in the World PR Newswire December 10, 1996, Tuesday

...around the globe. It will be the largest and most efficient 100 percent member-owned cooperative in the \$140 billion do-it-yourself industry. The TruServ cooperative will be comprised of several retail identities, including:

- True Value
- ServiStar
- Coast to Coast
- Grand Rental Station
- Taylor Rental Center
- Home & Garden Showplace
- Induserve Supply
- Coast To ...

73 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 U.P.I.  
United Press International

December 10, 1996, Tuesday, BC cycle

**SECTION:** Financial

**LENGTH:** 248 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value, Servi Star merging

**DATELINE:** CHICAGO, Dec. 10

**BODY:**

Cotter & Co., the largest wholesaler of hardware and related products to True Value hardware stores, and ServiStar Coast to Coast, the third largest wholesaler in the do-it-yourself market, Tuesday agreed to merge. The new entity, TruServ Corp., will have a combined retail empire of 10,500 outlets and ...

74 of 87 DOCUMENTS

75 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 Crain Communications Inc.  
Advertising Age

April 22, 1996

**SECTION:** Letters; Pg. 16

VIEWPOINT;LETTERS TO THE EDITOR;FIXING UP AD REVIEW;CALL 888-SOLUTION Advertising Age April 22, 1996

**LENGTH:** 1094 words

**HEADLINE:** VIEWPOINT;LETTERS TO THE EDITOR;FIXING UP AD REVIEW;CALL 888-SOLUTION

**BODY:**

...account for 49.6% of purchases in hardware stores, according to the National Retail Hardware Association, and they direct 44% of all do-it-yourself home improvement projects.

Now, on the subject of serving the **True Value** retailer...Owning the benefit of helpfulness serves True Value owners in two ways. One, there are more True Value ...

76 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1996 Business Wire, Inc.  
Business Wire

March 21, 1996, Thursday

**DISTRIBUTION:** Business Editors and Retail Industry Writers

**LENGTH:** 472 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value hits home run with Opening Day events

**DATELINE:** NEW YORK

**BODY:**

...fans, hectic spring and summer seasons, and an eagerness to please the active customers who enjoy watching baseball between do-it-yourself projects." **True Value's** opening day presence will also encompass unique in-stadium components. Additionally, this multi-faceted sponsorship will include ...

77 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1995 PR Newswire Association, Inc.  
PR Newswire

October 31, 1995, Tuesday

**SECTION:** Financial News

**DISTRIBUTION:** TO BUSINESS EDITOR

**LENGTH:** 483 words

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND TRUE VALUE TEAM UP IN A NEW PARTNERSHIP;Major League Baseball  
and True Value To Refurbish Up To 500 Community Baseball Fields Nationwide PR Newswire October 31, 1995,  
Tuesday

**HEADLINE:** MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND TRUE VALUE TEAM UP IN A NEW  
PARTNERSHIP;

Major League Baseball and True Value To Refurbish Up To 500 Community Baseball Fields Nationwide

**BODY:**

...just around the corner.' This is the philosophy of the independently owned and operated True Value stores," Kremers added.

The MLB sponsorship continues **True Value's** aggressive pursuit of the active, do-it-yourself customer who typically shops hardware and related stores. **True Value** is also seeking to heighten awareness of the Roberto Clemente Player of the Year Awards, gaining greater appreciation for players who demonstrate ...

78 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1995 Information Access Company, a Thomson Corporation Company  
ASAP

Copyright 1995 American Paint Journal Company  
American Paint & Coatings Journal

June 19, 1995

**SECTION:** Vol. 79 ; No. 30 ; Pg. 50; ISSN: 0098-5430

**LENGTH:** 1427 words

**HEADLINE:** Competing with power retailers: winners and losers.Special Report: Sales & Marketing  
Strategies in the Mega-Retailer Era

**BODY:**

...generally. The DIY market has shifted from previously dominant players like Sears to the new power retailers. The hardware cooperatives Ace and **True Value** are said to be doing well in the **DIY** category, whereas hardware wholesalers are said to be off dramatically in paint sales in the past decade, as are lumber yards and ...

79 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1995 PR Newswire Association, Inc.  
PR Newswire

April 25, 1995, Tuesday

**SECTION:** Lifestyle

**DISTRIBUTION:** TO FAMILY, LIFESTYLE AND FEATURES EDITORS

**LENGTH:** 371 words



ODORLESS DEODORIZER KILLS ALL SMELLS, ESPECIALLY PET SMELLS; IS SAFE TO KIDS,  
ENVIRONMENT PR Newswire April 25, 1995, Tuesday

**HEADLINE:** ODORLESS DEODORIZER KILLS ALL SMELLS, ESPECIALLY PET SMELLS; IS SAFE TO KIDS, ENVIRONMENT

**BODY:**

...16 oz. trigger spray bottle, \$39.95 per gallon, is available in pet, hardware, garden stores including True Value, Servistar, Ace, Agway, SuperPet and Do-It-Yourself Centers or call 800-376-2442 for locations.

//

80 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1995 The Hearst Corporation  
The Times Union (Albany, NY)

February 2, 1995, Thursday, THREE STAR EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS, Pg. C11

**LENGTH:** 420 words

**HEADLINE:** Colonie hardware store closing;  
True Value on Route 7 falls victim to "category killers"

**BYLINE:** AISLING SWIFT; Business writer

**BODY:**

...square-foot True Value, Home Quarters, at 130,000 square feet, dwarfs its competitor. The demise of the Route 7 True Value hardware store is the latest casualty in the war of the large do-it-yourself hardware stores against the small mom and pop retailers. The large category killers, which studies show can draw customers from ...

81 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1994 The Dallas Morning News  
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

September 2, 1994, Friday, HOME FINAL EDITION  
Correction Appended

**SECTION:** HOUSE & GARDEN; Pg. 1G

**LENGTH:** 1238 words

**HEADLINE:** Patio Potpourri;

Patio Potpourri;Do-it-yourselfers can create an outdoor living space from an array of materials THE DALLAS  
MORNING NEWS September 2, 1994, Friday, HOME FINAL EDITIONCorrection Appended

Do-it-yourselfers can create an outdoor living space from an array of materials

**BYLINE:** Julie Vargo, Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

**BODY:**

...another room outside the house."

The Fleischmanns are among the many homeowners who are rolling up their sleeves for patio projects.

"The do-it-yourself patio market is growing," says Mark Burris, the assistant manager of Elliott's **True Value** Hardware inDallas.

"People are finding it a more affordable alternative to decks."

Designs and paving materials depend on the ...

**CORRECTION-DATE:** September 3, 1994, Saturday, HOME FINAL EDITION

**CORRECTION:**

On Page 4G of Friday's House & Garden section, the location of Custom Stone Supply was listed incorrectly. The company is in Frisco.

82 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1993 P.G. Publishing Co.  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

October 12, 1993, Tuesday, SOONER EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS, Pg. B8

**LENGTH:** 1083 words

**HEADLINE:** A MATTER OF MARKETING;  
SMALL SHOPS USE SERVICE, UNIQUE GOODS TO COMPETE WITH RETAIL GOLIATHS

**BYLINE:** STEVE MASSEY, POST-GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

**BODY:**

...in Moon Township, adding to an abundance of competitors that includes Hechingers, 84 Lumber Co., and cooperatives Servi-Star, **True Value** and Ace.

Atlanta-based Home Depot Inc., the nation's largest do-it-yourself chain, also is expected to enter the fray as it expands into Pennsylvania. It is opening two suburban Philadelphia stores this year, and is scouting the ...

83 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Discovering a better way to water; Gardener's Notebook The Boston Globe September 16, 1993, Thursday, City Edition  
CORRECTION APPENDED

Copyright 1993 Globe Newspaper Company  
The Boston Globe

September 16, 1993, Thursday, City Edition  
CORRECTION APPENDED

**SECTION:** AT HOME; Pg. A1

**LENGTH:** 1188 words

**HEADLINE:** Discovering a better way to water;  
Gardener's Notebook

**BYLINE:** By Carol Stocker, Globe Staff

**BODY:**

...line. Will not design a system for you, but produces a 98-page free catalog to help you do **it yourself**. Five-year guarantee. This line is sometimes carried by **True Value** and Ace Hardware stores.

**CORRECTION-DATE:** September 30, 1993

**CORRECTION:**

**CORRECTION:** Because of a reporting error, the manufacturers of Netafim irrigation systems were incorrectly described as being affiliated with Agrifim in the Sept. 16 Gardener's Notebook.

84 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1993 Globe Newspaper Company  
The Boston Globe

August 5, 1993, Thursday, City Edition

**SECTION:** AT HOME; Pg. A2

**LENGTH:** 107 words

**HEADLINE:** Night lights for the garden;  
Shop Talk / JULIE HATFIELD

**BYLINE:** By Julie Hatfield, Globe Staff

**BODY:**

...an area of more than 600 square feet when motion is detected. Six lights, a power pack and cables for do-it-yourself installation are about \$ 50 at **True Value**, Ace Hardware, Sears or by phone order to Inter-matic Order Service, (815) 675-2321.

True Value's ads get personal; 'familiar face' campaign helps build chain's DIY business. Chain Store Age Executive with Shopping Center Age December, 1986

85 of 87 DOCUMENTS

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Copyright 1986 Lebhar-Friedman Inc.  
Chain Store Age Executive with Shopping Center Age

December, 1986

**SECTION:** Vol. 62 ; Pg. 73; ISSN: 0193-1199

**LENGTH:** 1039 words

**HEADLINE:** True Value's ads get personal; 'familiar face' campaign helps build chain's **DIY** business.

**BODY:**

...notes Taylor, "even repair novices couldn't help but let down their defenses against shopping in a **DIY** supermarket.'

Based on this success, Taylor reveals that **True Value** plans to initiate similar campaigns once every other year to convey other generic messages to its clientele, adding, "I ...

86 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1986 Chicago Tribune Company  
Chicago Tribune

November 19, 1986 Wednesday, DU PAGE SPORTS FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** DU PAGE; Pg. 6; ZONE: D

**LENGTH:** 1257 words

**HEADLINE:** HARDWARE STORE THRIVES ON KNOWING THE UNKNOWN

**BYLINE:** By Barbara Mahany.

**COMPANY:**

**TRUE VALUE HARDWARE INC (54%); DIY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (63%);**

87 of 87 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 1985 Chicago Tribune Company  
Chicago Tribune

SHOPPING THE NEW HARDWARE HOUSES Chicago Tribune February 22, 1985 Friday, FINAL EDITION

February 22, 1985 Friday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** FRIDAY; Pg. 48; ZONE: C

**LENGTH:** 2045 words

**HEADLINE:** SHOPPING THE NEW HARDWARE HOUSES

**BYLINE:** By Abigail Foerstner.

**BODY:**

...year, Harper said.

The warehouse stores argue that their blitzkrieg advertising will benefit local hardware stores by bringing do-it-yourself projects and materials to the attention of consumers.

Hardware chains such as Ace and True Value, in general, are responding to the new competition by advising their independent local stores to increase the stress on service and add ...



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## Life Online

### Do It Yourself

By Sandy Berger

Everyone hates the idea of having to call a repairman and face a large bill for a simple household fix. So the Internet, with its wealth of information, has become the go-to place for do-it-yourself folks who just need a little knowledge to tackle that home repair, installation, or improvement.

If you're looking for instructions on a home project or repair, there are several excellent do-it-yourself websites. A great place to start is the [DoltYourself.com website](#). A quick visit to the [How-To Series Online](#) will help you with everything from designing a kitchen to repairing a faucet. The How-To Series is presented by categories, which include plumbing, painting, weatherproofing, outdoor living, electrical, doors and windows, hardware, and more. Instructions include composting, installing ceiling tile, building a desk, and hanging wallpaper.

If you watch instructional television, you are probably already familiar with the DIY Network, but you should also be aware that the [DIY website](#) is just as informative as their television programming. They have tutorials and videos of gardening, home building, home improvements, woodworking, and a large variety of hobbies. They even cover grilling, gardening, boating, and pet ownership.

[This Old House](#) is another television series that has an online counterpart. While they specialize in remodeling and home additions, the website has an informative [Homeowner Know-How](#) section. This Old House is also worth a look for its more unusual tutorials like how to [tune up a toilet](#) and how to [set up a home theater](#).

For more do-it-yourself websites, visit the [Refdesk.com's Do-It-Yourself Resources](#). Besides the usual links to home repair websites, they have extensive links to some do-it-yourself projects that are not repair-related, like brewing beer and candle and soap making.

If you are looking for information on how to tackle a specific repair, try any of the above websites or use a search engine to find what you need. When I wanted to fix my toilet, the Google search engine led me to [Toiletology 101](#). In their own words, this website will let you "plunge in, flush out the facts, and plumb the depths of toilet repairs." Even though it sounds a bit hokey, it did help me repair my constantly-flushing toilet.

If you're looking for do-it-yourself help, don't forget to check out the websites for retail stores and manufacturers. When I wanted to replace the battery in my watch, I found an

excellent [printable document](#) at the Energizer battery site that explained the process in detail. The Know-How section at [The Home Depot](#) gave me some excellent instructions on removing wallpaper. I also found an excellent How-To Library and How-To Clinic at the [Lowes.com](#) website under their Project Planning section. [True Value's Projects section](#) was also chock full of great "To Do" ideas, including a useful monthly calendar of chores appropriate for the time of year.

If you're interested in a specific project or repair, you may have to do some investigative surfing to find exactly what you need. Along the way, you will likely run into a few websites that try to sell you products, books, or instructions. However, a thorough Internet search is sure to yield plenty of free information. Surfing the web will turn up tons of free repair and house maintenance websites that will help you keep those repair bills at bay and give you a few interesting project ideas as well.

**AARP does not recommend or endorse any of these products or web sites. Please be advised that there are other similar products and web sites available which were not reviewed and are not listed here.**

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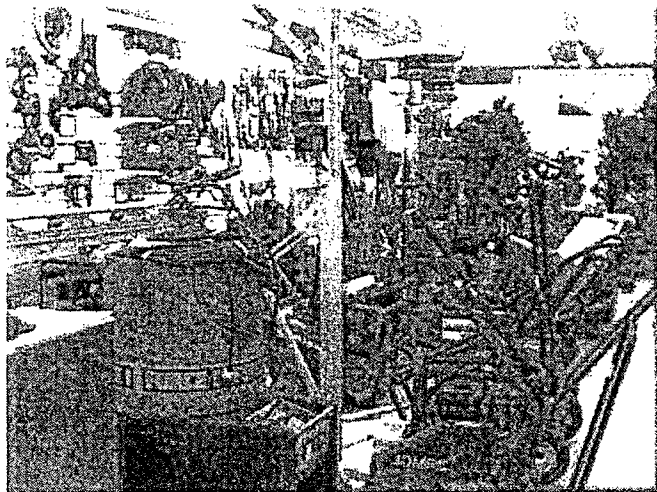
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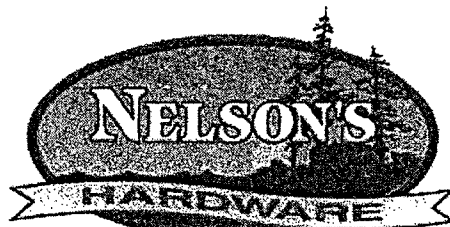
- True Value Hardware Store
- Vinyl Flooring
- Hardwood Flooring
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- Restonic Bedding
- Total Flooring
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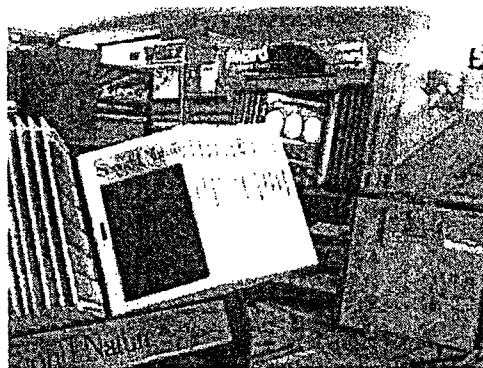
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Nelson True Value offers [bedding](#), [laminate flooring](#), [flooring](#), [hardwood flooring](#), [hardware store](#), [vinyl flooring](#), [true value](#), [equipment rental](#), [party rentals](#), [just ask rental](#) for Menomonee, Chippewa Falls, Hudson, Rice Lake, New Richmond, Ladysmith, Bloomer, Barron, Baldwin, Amery and surrounding Wisconsin communities.

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Ah, brave soul. Venturing where only the most courageous dare to tread. Relax, there are plenty of do-it-yourselfers who have tried your project and succeeded. Take a look...

[Do It Yourself Online](#) - Plenty of free information mixed in with the available for purchase designs. Look for the DIY how-tos.

[Home Repair Stuff](#) - Just a page, but what a page. This portal opens links to sites and articles for most repair project needs.

[True Value](#) - In the USA, this store is well known to do it yourselfers. Plenty of projects that are easy to follow for electrical switches, heating & cooling, appliances, plumbing, gardening and more to make your "honey do" list a breeze.

[Repairclinic.com](#) - Handy home appliance parts site, with detailed illustrations and instructions on the inner workings of most kitchen appliances, (plus air conditioners and dehumidiers), each complete with a FAQ, troubleshooting guide, e-mail help.

[DIYData](#) - UK based site with excellent resources and links to commercial sites. Electrical repairs are set to meet UK standards.

[Hometime](#) - You're probably familiar with this TV show. The online site is just as helpful with tons of projects and safety tips.

[FreeWW](#) - Free woodworking plans and advice. Furniture, out buildings, simple toys and more.

[Jeff Greef Woodworking](#) - Hundreds of mail order designs are available in addition to the free plans and a great links directory, along with interviews and online chat.

[Al's Home Improvement Center](#) - Al must be that neighbor you wish you had - the one who knows everything and loves to help.

[HomeTips](#) - "HomeTips is your one-stop resource for help with home improvement, remodeling houses, home repair, decorating, and buying appliances and other home products." Yep.

[Real Home Guide](#) - Directory includes do-it-yourself sites and many other resources you'll find useful.

[Help With DIY](#) - Free painting, plumbing and tiling tips.

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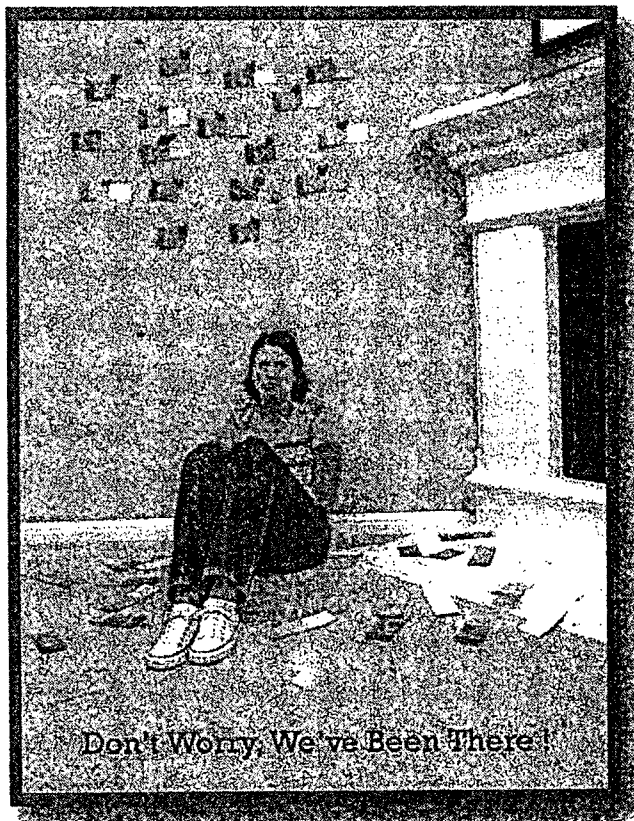
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- Install A Garbage Disposal.
- Painting A Room - Step By Step.
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Sunday, July 2, 2006 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

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## True Value ready to fight big-box rivals after clearing up its finances

**By Dave Carpenter**  
*The Associated Press*

CHICAGO — True Value CEO Lyle Heidemann spends a lot of his time shopping these days — and that's a good thing for a chain that had lost its way in retail.

Roaming the aisles of big-box competitors and other retailers that have put hundreds of its member stores out of business, Heidemann and True Value are actively on the prowl for more customers after a restructuring that has cleaned up its financial problems and given it new momentum.

Whether it can regain business lost to home-improvement behemoths Home Depot and Lowe's remains questionable. But after years on the defensive, the 6,000-store member-owned cooperative is fighting back again with an aggressive marketing strategy and what its first-year CEO calls "a whole new beginning" for True Value. The quest: Attract more "weekend warriors" away from the giant stores.

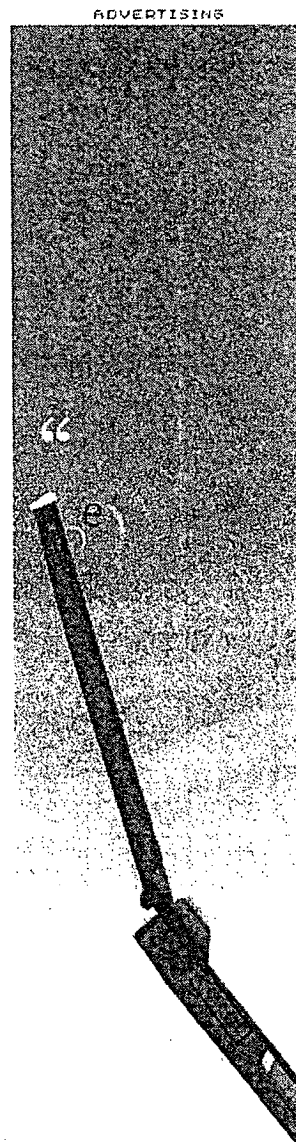
"We're trying to now not [just] survive but in essence put together a strategy for growth," Heidemann said in an interview at True Value's headquarters. "And ... probably the biggest difference is that we're focused on retail versus wholesale."

True Value always acted as a wholesaler to its retail members, but now it is focusing more on what will help them improve store sales and profits, he said.

Heidemann is pounding the aisles of big and little stores alike, taking mental notes in search of competitive tips.

In the week before the interview, he had visited stores of Home Depot, Lowe's, Restoration Hardware, Linens 'n Things, Crate and Barrel, Target, and Bed, Bath & Beyond, among others.

Marketplace
Jobs   Autos   Shopping
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ADVERTISING

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True Value was synonymous with hardware for many Americans for decades following its establishment in 1948 by hardware wholesaler and distributor John Cotter, who formed a Chicago-based cooperative of 25 dues-paying retailers and called it Cotter & Co. By his death in 1989, sales exceeded \$2 billion and nearly one in every four U.S. hardware stores bore the True Value name.

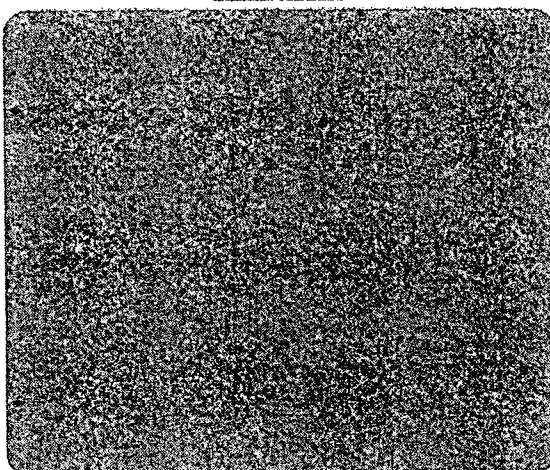


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Bellevue**

### Making a recovery

Since then, the cooperative — which became TruServ and then was renamed True Value last year — has been buffeted by the relentless expansion of giant discount-store competitors, financial losses and accounting errors that led to a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation and a restatement of earnings for 1997-99. More than 1,000 members have left, most closing down but some defecting to rivals such as cooperative Ace Hardware.

Financial specialist Pamela Forbes Lieberman was brought in to straighten out the mess in 2001 and headed the company until last June, when she was replaced with Heidemann, an industry veteran. Heidemann spent 36 years with Sears before retiring in 2003, overseeing at various times its hardware, tools and paint, and lawn and garden businesses, among others.



The 61-year-old Heidemann credits Lieberman for leaving True Value in solid shape, including four straight years of improving profits and same-store sales growth of 2 percent last year, when revenues totaled \$2.04 billion.

That momentum has enabled him to undertake new retail initiatives, such as adding regional items — for example, snow shovels in the north, fire ant killer in the south and moss killer for the Northwest — and changing pricing and inventory procedures, along with making the marketing push.

### Trying to compete

Despite the financial recovery, retail consultant Howard Davidowitz isn't sure True Value and its independent operators can be viable in the face of continuing growth by the discount powerhouses.

"They do have a convenience element, and they have some niche businesses," said Davidowitz, chairman of Davidowitz & Associates in New York. "But in this environment of Wal-Mart, Target, Home Depot, and Lowe's, can they be competitive on price? I think the book is out."

The continuing loss of 150 to 200 members a year, which hardware industry

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trends suggest is likely to continue, underscores the challenge.

Hardware stores are seeing their share of the do-it-yourself market shrink steadily, with sales growing in the low single-digit percentages annually while their big-box rivals grow at a double-digit clip, doubling their sales in about the last five years.

"Home Depot and Lowe's are going to get bigger and bigger and they're going to take more market share away from small mom-and-pops," said Morningstar analyst Anthony Chukumba. "They have much more purchasing power, a wider selection and lower prices, and at the end of the day that's what customers are really looking for."

Heidemann says True Value, which also operates Grand Rental Station, Taylor Rental, Party Central and other stores, isn't trying to be "a little box carrying all the big-box items." But it is providing its member stores with more detailed information about competitors' prices in individual markets in order to help them compete better head-to-head in its core areas: plumbing, electrical, lawn and garden and paint.

### New ad campaign

By dropping its decade-old advertising slogan "Help is right around the corner" this spring, the company acknowledges that a reputation for knowledgeable, available service isn't enough. Its new print and television campaign introduces an updated tagline — "Start right. Start here." — reflecting the consumer trend away from repair and maintenance and the billions of dollars now spent annually on home upgrades, alterations and enhancements.

After listening to customer focus groups, True Value is targeting not bargain-hunters or advice-seekers but the "do-it-yourself enthusiasts" who already account for an estimated 43 percent of its sales. The goal: to get them to come to True Value first, not Home Depot or Lowe's, for small projects such as painting, refixturing a bathroom or changing lighting.

"We are a very well-known brand," said Carol Wentworth, vice president of marketing. "But the key in retail is to be top of mind when someone says 'I'm going out to do a project' — who do you think of first. And when you do a survey of the entire industry and all the customers who are active in the industry, True Value's not top of mind."

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## Press Releases

### Integrated Campaign Positions True Value

Thursday, March 22, 2007--CHICAGO, March 22, 2007 – Whether it's a home repair, lawn and garden or paint project, True Value wants do-it-yourself enthusiasts to know that it is the place to go to get the job done. The hardware retailer asserts its claim – under the fitting tagline "Start Right. Start Here." – as the first stop for product assortment and knowledgeable customer service with a new integrated campaign set to launch April 16.

Created by MARC USA, the campaign features clever television and radio spots, online brand advertising and eye-catching print ads. Print ads will be located in a targeted selection of publications and will include a coupon insertion for customers to redeem at their local True Value store. In addition, one click on the online ads will link to a microsite full of helpful advice in many categories offered by True Value.

The campaign builds on the highly successful new positioning for True Value launched last spring which tripled the advertising awareness among the DIY enthusiast demographic.

"The advertisements in this campaign are built on the idea that True Value employees can provide expert advice because they have first-hand experience with the same home improvement projects that DIY enthusiasts want to tackle," said Carol Wentworth, vice president of marketing for True Value Company. "We want people to see these ads and think 'they're just like me' – connecting with our employees and realizing that True Value can deliver on both product and service."

By connecting with the target, the campaign showcases the empathy True Value employees feel for DIY enthusiasts and reinforces the theme, "We've been there." Two light-hearted television spots show True Value employees encountering the same challenges their customers face.

For example, in "Dimmer," a True Value associate has just installed a dimmer switch in her home. She goes from elation to frustration as she realizes she still has more maintenance and repair work to do. When a customer comes into the store with that same look, she empathizes and knows exactly what he needs for all his home improvement projects.

In the second ad, "Blow," our hero, also a True Value associate, is watering his lawn when his daughter blows on a dandelion. Trying to save his lawn from the weed's seeds, he dives to catch them. Back at the store, he instantly relives this experience when he sees a little girl blowing bubbles – the perfect set-up for him to recommend fertilizer to her dad for a "weed-free" lawn.

Each of five new magazine ads captures an iconic moment of frustration in the world of a DIY enthusiast, reminding the reader that True Value has the tools, products and advice they need to solve these problems.

- A man with lawn envy looking for solutions
- A woman using her cell phone to shed light on her door keys
- A couple reluctant to commit to a bright paint color
- A man realizing his entry could use some updating when his doorknob comes off in his hand
- A man unable to reach his light fixture to change a bulb

There is added incentive to begin projects at True Value with a "\$5 off a \$25 purchase" business reply card (BRC) inserted in 36 titles carrying the print ads. The same offer is also available on the new StartRightStartHere.com microsite. This site will feature three new articles per month during April, May and June with timely project advice, plus a store locator. Each month's project advice will focus on painting, lawn and garden, and home repair and maintenance.

"DIY enthusiasts spend significant time online researching projects and collecting product information," said Wentworth. "This is an opportunity to establish new relationships with younger

customers and first-time homeowners as well as deepen the relationship with our current customers."

Online banners on HGTV.com and DIY Network.com, as well as text in the print ads, will drive consumers to StartRightStartHere.com. In addition, True Value will be the exclusive sponsor of DIY Network's "Blog Cabin" from April through October.

"With the addition of a strong consumer offer plus internet advertising, the integrated campaign is designed to deliver stronger awareness and traffic for True Value during the most relevant spring selling season," said Jean McLaren, president of MARC USA Chicago. "The national media buy effectively reaches DIY enthusiasts where most True Value stores are located."

Television buys include Country Music Television, DIY, Great American Country, Hallmark, Outdoor, Speed, Women's Entertainment Network, Weather Channel, Versus and HGTV. Print buys include Midwest Living, Country Home, Better Homes & Gardens, Country Living and Woman's Day among others.

True Value, headquartered in Chicago, is one of the world's largest retailer-owned wholesale hardware cooperatives with sales of \$2.0 billion in 2006. The True Value cooperative includes approximately 5,600 independent retailer locations worldwide operating under the store identities of True Value, Grand Rental Station, Taylor Rental, Party Central, Home & Garden Showplace and Induserve Supply. Additional information on True Value and its retail identities is available at [www.truevaluecompany.com](http://www.truevaluecompany.com).

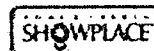
MARC USA is one of the largest independent advertising agencies in the United States with more than 300 associates, billings over \$400 million and offices in Chicago, Dallas, Fort Lauderdale, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh and partner agencies MARC Canada in Toronto and MARCA Hispanic in Miami. MARC USA builds brands through the creative application of new technology and business-changing solutions for a wide range of clients. Integrated marketing communications services include advertising, strategic planning, research, public relations, marketing technology services, media planning and buying, direct marketing and sales promotion.

BACK

*True Value.*



TAYLOR RENTAL



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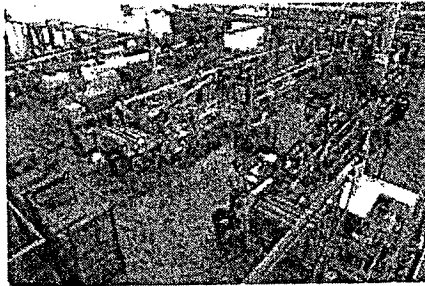
## True Value Manufacturing, The value chain

Manufacturing in Action. Source : The Manufacturer US  
Published : August 2005

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**True Value Manufacturing is responding to market challenges with investment in facilities, processes, and marketing, Ruari McCallion learns from Gene Brickhouse**

It isn't too hard to find companies that have saved factory space by revising the layout to improve process flow. Ten, 20, or even 30 percent space economy isn't unusual—but an 85 percent savings, achieved in one attempt, is nearly as rare as hens' teeth.



"We had the opportunity to improve our operational facilities by consolidating production of our two facilities at our Cary, IL, plant," says Gene Brickhouse, director of manufacturing for True Value Company. "The integration of equipment will use 22,000 square feet in our existing plant in Cary; previously, it occupied 175,000 square feet."

True Value manufacturing is, as its name suggests, the manufacturing arm of True Value Company, which sells hardware, garden, and home improvement products through True Value stores nationwide and other outlets, through third-party wholesalers and agents. True Value Company is totally owned by its membership, the independent business people who own and manage around 6,000 independent hardware stores and other retail identities across the country. Between them, they have in the region of a three percent share of the growing home maintenance and do-it-yourself (DIY) market in the US. To put those figures into hard numbers, the DIY market as a whole is worth \$170 billion or more and is growing. Member stores' share amounts to annual retail sales of approximately \$5 billion. However, while the market is growing, the independents' share is under serious and sustained pressure from the big box retailers. "Ninety percent of our production output of approximately \$110 million goes through our own stores. We're always looking at ways to enhance production, to generate savings that can be passed on to our stores and their customers."

Hardly a week goes by without some new megastore opening up somewhere. They have always had an emphasis on low prices; the independents' strength has long been their customer service, their knowledge, and the time they are prepared to spend with their customers. But the big box retailers are responding to that, as well. The poorly-informed, low-paid shelf-stacker who barely knew his or her way around their own store is an endangered species; increasingly, the staff is likely to be better informed and able to be

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more helpful. True Value and its owners are fighting back in their turn. The investment in new capacity in its Cary factory is an important part of that.

"We will be able to achieve a lot of efficiencies by reducing our batch cycle time," Brickhouse says. "Investment in new equipment is also enabling us to improve quality, scheduling, and effectiveness, while retaining flexibility and allowing us to develop new product lines." Planning for the new plant began in October 2004; construction contracts were let at the end of July and building is expected to be complete by the end of 2005. That's a great future to look forward to but True Value's competitors aren't going to wait around and give the company a chance to catch up. It has to be better at what it's doing right now, and it is. The other side of the retail coin is marketing: The big box guys do it heavily, across a wide spectrum. True Value's approach is more subtle and focused.

"We have been growing our sales through our member stores, by about five percent, last year. This year, we're budgeting for sustained increases as well, which will be well ahead of the market's growth rate of three percent," he says. "We started a marketing program named 'Color Made Simple', which we've supported aggressively, with two-day training sessions and marketing support," he says. "The key to success for retailers is paint expertise and we're ensuring our retailers can fight back with a complete product armory: competitive price, availability, and quality. True Value Manufacturing is becoming more efficient in manufacturing; the co-op and our members are focusing more advertising and marketing on paint." The route to customers is through cable-based and regional media, capitalizing on the fact that True Value stores are locally-owned, independent, family businesses. The target audience may well know the proprietors personally; their kids may go to the same schools and the parents meet at local clubs and sports venues. Those local ties are important and are being strengthened through marketing projects that are aimed to create brand awareness and familiarity, and awareness of store availability. The Color Made Simple campaign is based on the reality that paint is a decision solution, and the decisions on colors are overwhelmingly taken by women.

"In 2005, we're advertising in national women's magazines, we have a new Web site at [truevaluepaint.com](http://truevaluepaint.com), and a national PR push among other activities. All are very strongly aimed at women," Brickhouse says. Behind the factory doors, the improvement program isn't limited to investment in machinery and facilities.

"Our employees are able to take advantage of total quality training. We're challenging them to do so and to apply the lessons they learn to practical solutions," he continues. "We've introduced an incentive program for our supervisors that encourages them to work together, as a group, and to help their teams to recognize improvement opportunities. Everyone in the company, from top management to the shop floor, is involved in improvement, in processes and quality."

True Value Manufacturing is clearly fighting strongly on behalf of its owners and their customers.

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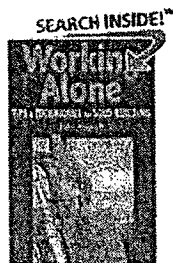
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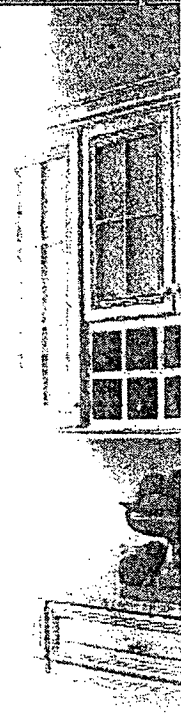
The main page of Better Homes & Gardens magazine, of Iowa's Meredith Publishing.

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Popular Mechanics Magazine

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Where Can I?

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## The Retail Hardware/Home Improvement Market

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The retail hardware industry has been around as long as people have needed shelter – supplying the tools, materials and know-how to build, maintain, repair and improve homes. It began to boom immediately after World War II, and, less than a decade later, the do-it-yourself phenomenon appeared.

By the 1970s, the retail format we now know as home improvement centers had opened the door to industry expansion. Hardware stores added lumber and building materials and became home centers. Lumberyards expanded hardlines shelfgoods offerings and moved into the home center category. Corporate chains developed and brought price competition.

By the 1990s, home improvement chains were opening stores of 100,000 square feet and larger and expanding beyond major population areas into smaller markets. However, the market for big-box stores is fast approaching saturation.

Today the National Retail Hardware Association and the Home Center Institute define the primary channel of distribution for hardware and home improvement merchandise as hardware stores, home improvement centers and lumber/building material outlets. These three types of stores contribute sales of \$212 billion a year to the U.S. economy.

The best way to describe this industry is to visualize it as a spectrum with hardware stores at one end and contractor-oriented lumberyards at the other. Historically, hardware stores sold home maintenance and repair shelfgoods to consumers and lumberyards sold lumber and building materials to home builders and professional customers.

As both types of retailers looked for expansion opportunities, they began to move toward each other. Hardware stores added building materials; lumberyards added hardware. Home improvement centers, which developed in the late 1960s, became the hybrid where hardware stores and lumberyards blended into the third segment. Some concentrate on consumers, others on professionals; still others try to appeal to both markets.

Today, retailers are experimenting with even more types of store formats that fall all along this

spectrum. They are also refining techniques for Internet selling. Many retailers now have their own web sites; wholesale suppliers are working to develop web connections for independent retailers. A few "pure-play" home improvement web sites have sprung up but, so far, have not had much success.

Hardware stores, home improvement centers and lumber/building material outlets can be defined by the products they carry and the customers they sell to.

There is little commonality in the way each segment does business and there is no easy way for vendors to approach this fragmented market. Retailers can buy from full-line hardware wholesalers, specialty distributors or direct from manufacturers. Most retail companies buy all three ways.

Independent family-owned stores tend to belong to marketing and buying programs offered by wholesale organizations. In addition to purchasing merchandise from wholesalers, retailers receive marketing and advertising support. As a general practice, they buy at least 60% of their merchandise from a primary wholesale source and use secondary or specialty distributors for most of the rest. A small portion is purchased directly from manufacturers.

Because independent retailers frequently use the store identity program offered by their primary wholesaler, they appear to the consuming public to be a chain. They are not corporate chains, nor are they franchises in the sense that McDonald's is a franchise. Stores are individually owned and the retailers maintain a strong independence about what they buy. There are very few true corporate chains in the hardware segment and virtually all are privately owned. Sears Hardware is a notable exception.

Large single-unit or corporate chain operations tend to buy direct from manufacturers. Depending on their size, location and internal buying structure they may rely to some degree on wholesalers for special services and fill-in orders.

All three types of stores sell core home improvement merchandise: hardware, hand and

power tools and accessories, plumbing/heating/cooling products, electrical supplies, paint/paint sundries/home decorating products and lawn and garden items. In addition, home improvement centers and lumber/building materials outlets sell commodity lumber and building materials. Hardware stores may also sell housewares, automotive supplies or sporting goods.

Depending on store size and merchandise mix, these stores carry from 15,000 to 50,000-plus items.

### **HARDWARE STORES**

Hardware stores are primarily independent family-owned operations. Most are affiliated with dealer-owned or co-op wholesalers or wholesaler merchandising groups that offer marketing programs.

Hardware stores can range in size up to 20,000 or 30,000 square feet or larger. Sales volumes can exceed one million dollars per unit. They tend to serve neighborhood markets, tailor their mix of products and services to their individual markets and position themselves as offering personal service and well-informed salespeople. They advertise aggressively and are open during evening and weekend hours. Primary customers are homeowners.

Aggressive hardware stores can compete well with chains because they can distinguish themselves from big-box retailers. Most consumers know what a hardware store is.

Many hardware stores identify with their primary wholesaler's stores program. True Value, Ace, Do it Best, Trustworthy, Sentry and PRO are among the most widely known marketing identities.

### **HOME IMPROVEMENT CENTERS**

The home improvement center segment is dominated by national chain operations. There are still many smaller, family-owned, regional companies, but they find it increasingly difficult to compete. Their merchandise mix is much the same as that of the chains and their stores may look similar, leaving price as the most visible competitive feature.

Home improvement centers combine a full range of home repair, maintenance and improvement products. They seek to give consumers a one-stop source for home improvement and repair

products. They emphasize big-ticket home improvement projects. Some focus on do-it-yourself customers, others on professional customers.

Salesfloors are large – some over 100,000 square feet – to permit stocking lumber and building materials under the same roof with hardlines shelfgoods. They may have outside lawn and garden areas or lumberyards. Annual volume can range up to \$45 million and more per unit for the big-box companies.

They, too, are aggressive advertisers and tend to push a low-price image. They are open long hours; some stay open 24 hours.

Big-box salesfloors are being remerchandised with a softer look. Merchandise is not stacked to the ceiling in all aisles, and they feature decorating centers with a more upscale design. Customers still may come face to face with forklifts moving goods from the receiving dock to the salesfloor. These companies are trying different formats – smaller salesfloors, more amenities, specializing in a narrower product mix, emphasizing convenience – as they look for ways to expand. Some of the largest are moving into foreign markets as a growth strategy.

Home improvement centers tend to buy much of their merchandise direct and do not identify with wholesaler marketing programs even when they use wholesale suppliers. The larger the company the less likely it is to use wholesaler suppliers.

The largest home improvement center chains are The Home Depot, Lowe's and Menard's.

### **LUMBER/BUILDING MATERIAL OUTLETS**

Historically, lumber/building material outlets concentrated on contractors and builders for their business. They made no attempt to sell to consumers. The do-it-yourself movement made consumer business attractive to lumberyards. Although contractor yards still exist, most have taken steps to attract consumers. These "consumer-oriented" lumberyards are included in the primary market.

They can be chain or independent operations. Some are affiliated with wholesaling co-ops or merchandising groups but are not inclined to identify with a marketing program. They find hardlines wholesalers especially helpful for



shelfgoods and assistance in consumer marketing.

Upwards of three-fourths of their business comes from their traditional customer base of contractors, builders, remodelers and other professionals. Their merchandise mix is slanted toward these customers, with 70% to 80% of their sales coming from lumber and building materials.

They tend to operate much like contractor yards, with limited lines of hardware products, prevalence of service desks, early opening hours and fewer evening hours. Locations may be less accessible to consumers than those of hardware stores and home improvement centers.

To appeal to consumers, the lumber/building material outlets expanded salesfloors beyond contractor showrooms, added more hardware products than would be required for a purely professional clientele, adjusted store hours to some degree and launched consumer advertising programs.

Annual volume can reach \$5 million or more per unit; salesfloors are smaller than 10,000 square feet with much of the commodity merchandise stocked in outside yards.

Some of the better known lumber/building materials companies include 84 Lumber, Lanoga, Stock Building Supply, BMC West, Sutherland Lumber and Foxworth-Galbraith.

#### **THE ROLE OF RETAIL CHAINS**

The high visibility of chains such as The Home Depot, Lowe's and Menard's leads the unwary to believe that the hardware/home improvement industry is dominated by these giants. The perception of a consolidated industry is strengthened by the chain image projected by True Value, Ace, Do it Best, Trustworthy, PRO and the other store identification programs.

Chains are important in this industry, but they do not control the retail channel. Although chains continue to gain market share, the hardware/home improvement channel remains fragmented, with sales moving through some 41,600 store locations.

NRHA/HCI estimates that the 25 largest companies represent about 51% of the primary market. The three largest home improvement

companies — The Home Depot, Lowe's and Menard's — control about 41% of this channel's sales. That means nearly 60% of the primary home improvement retail channel business goes through small and mid-size chains and independent retailers.

#### **SALES TRENDS**

Sales growth for the industry as a whole should continue at a respectable rate. Growth will come from fewer stores generating more sales and it will come from all three segments.

The rate of sales growth has leveled off at 4% to 5% a year, on average, substantially slower than the double-digit growth during the late 1970s and early 1980s. This is normal and expected as a retail industry matures. Further, dollar growth is far greater than it was two and a half decades ago. Growth is compounding on ever-higher dollar volume.

#### **STORE UNIT TRENDS**

NRHA/HCI believes that independent retailers are alive and strong. In fact, there are signs that independents are offering much stronger competition than some of the large chains expected. In some areas, where chains battle with each other, independents have been known to retake market share when the dust settled.

There is a perception that hardware stores are going out of business at an alarming rate. Not so. Since 1975, hardware stores have experienced a net decline of 4,200 units (about 150/year). That is fewer than failed in a single year during the economic depression of the 1930s. The message: When customers spend on their homes, hardware stores can compete successfully.

Annual cost of doing business surveys conducted among independent retailers show salesfloor square footage holding steady, average per store sales rising and productivity and profitability measurements improving. The top quartile independents turn in a financial performance that is as good as and in many cases better than corporate chains.

NRHA/HCI believes there is room in the hardware/home improvement industry for many types of store formats, for independents and chains. Will all the stores in each segment survive? No, but the best will.



## **True Value plans to launch integrated ad campaign**

*Home Channel News*

March 29, 2007

March 29 - True Value will kick off its 2007 ad campaign on April 16, using the same "Start Right. Start Here." tag line that originated last year but focusing more on the co-op's knowledgeable staff and breadth of product.

"The advertisements in this campaign are built on the idea that True Value employees can provide expert advice because they have first-hand experience with the same home improvement projects that DIY enthusiasts want to tackle," said Carol Wentworth, vp-marketing for True Value. "We want people to see these ads and think 'they're just like me' -- connecting with our employees and realizing that True Value can deliver on both product and service."

According to True Value, the 2006 campaign tripled the co-op's advertising awareness among the DIY enthusiast demographic. At the same time, research showed that only 15 percent of True Value DIY shoppers go to True Value first for their maintenance and repair projects.

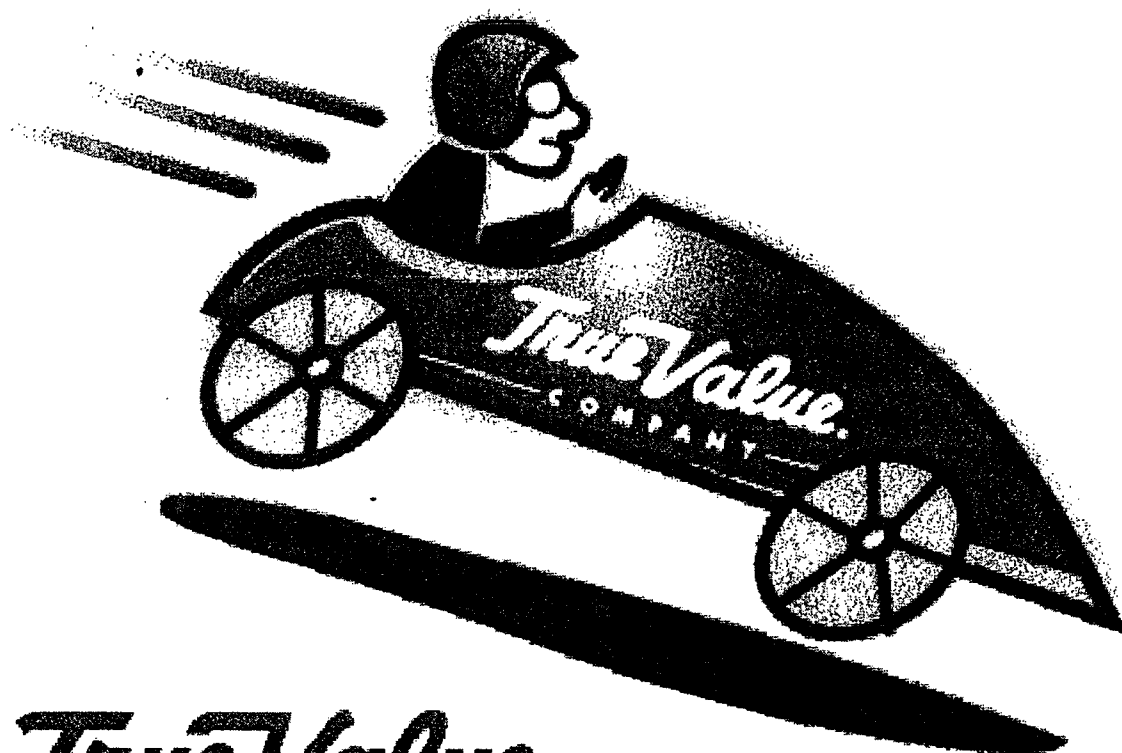
"Consider the flip side of that: 85 percent of those who are already shopping True Value are going to a big box or another hardware store first for their repair and maintenance projects," Wentworth said.

The 2007 campaign, created by MARC USA, shows the empathy True Value employees feel for DIY enthusiasts and reinforces the theme, "We've been there." Two light-hearted television spots show True Value employees encountering the same challenges their customers face, while five magazine ads will communicate that True Value has the tools, products and advice consumers need to solve these problems. The ads include a man with lawn envy looking for solutions, a woman using her cell phone to shed light on her door keys and a man realizing his entry could use some updating when the doorknob comes off in his hand.

Television buys include Country Music Television, DIY, Great American Country, Hallmark, Outdoor, Speed, Women's Entertainment Network, Weather Channel, Versus and HGTV. Print buys include Midwest Living, Country Home, Better Homes & Gardens, Country Living and Woman's Day.

In addition, online banners on HGTV.com and DIYNetwork.com, as well as text in the print ads, will drive consumers to StartRightStartHere.com, a microsite featuring three new articles per month during April, May and June. The articles will offer project advice in the areas of painting, lawn and garden, and home repair and maintenance, and will include a store locator.

"DIY enthusiasts spend significant time online researching projects and collecting product information," Wentworth said. "This is an opportunity to establish new relationships with younger customers and first-time homeowners, as well as deepen the relationship with our current customers."



**True Value**  
— COMPANY —

## Building momentum

**At True Value, Retail Growth means bigger stores, better spots**

By Lisa Girard and Brae Canlon

*When Joe Pater opens a hardware store in St. Joseph, Mich., on April 13, he will join the growing ranks of True Value dealers who have decided to take a leap of faith this year. True Value's "Retail Growth" initiative, launched at its 2006 fall market, is gaining momentum, with 13 expansion projects underway and another 63 in the approval pipeline.*

Most of the projects involve opening a new or additional unit. Some are relocations to a bigger and better spot. A few dealers are staying put but adding square footage. They all share one thing in common, however: none of them is taking the leap alone.

"I have five or six True Value people in the store right now, helping me get ready for our soft opening on Monday," said Pater. His retail consultant, Chad Taylor, even made the first official sale: two paintbrushes to a contractor who wandered in while they were stocking the shelves. "I'm going to frame the bill," Pater said.

This kind of partnership underpins the co-op's

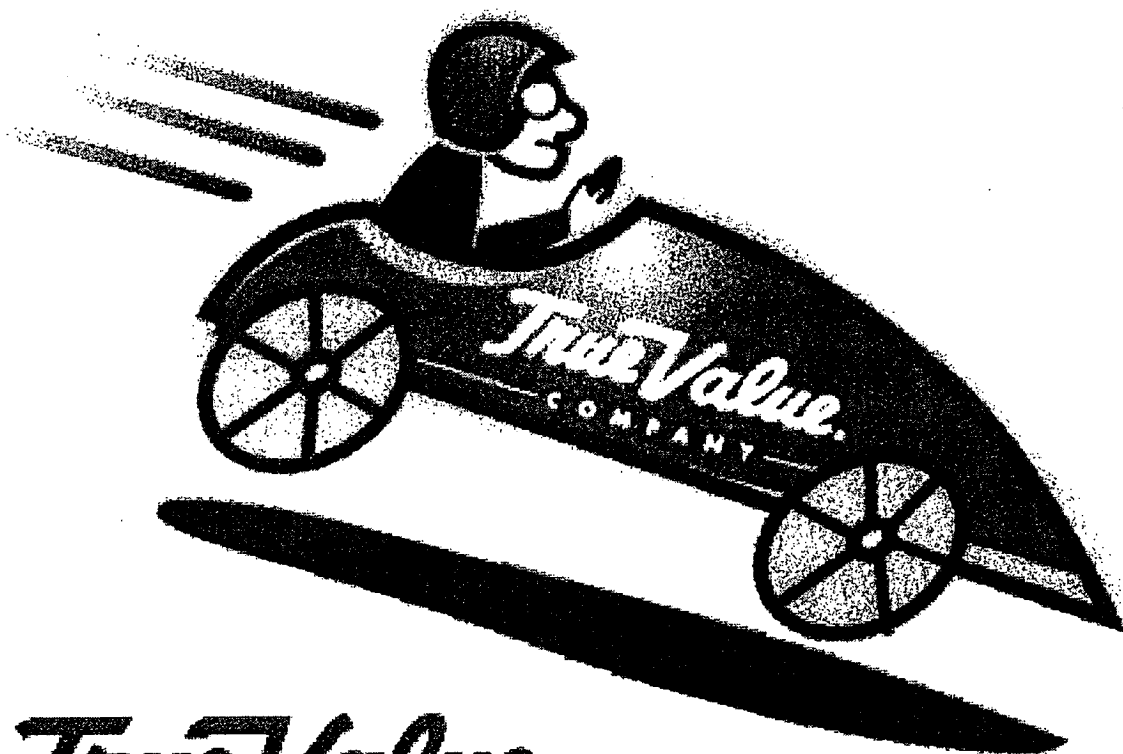
new expansion program, which offers loans, credits, services and other incentives to help co-op members add square footage to their operations. "We've had well over 100 members who have shown interest [in the program]," said True Value president and CEO Lyle Heidemann. "Our goal is that by mid-year 2007, we will have developed a pipeline of stores and will start opening up a store a week or expanding a store a week." (see Q&A with Lyle Heidemann, page 20)

Adding or expanding by a store per week may sound overly ambitious, even with 5,600-plus retail stores on its membership rolls. But Fred Kirst, True Value's vp-retail development and specialty

business, calls the figure "more than doable."

Kirst's job is twofold: he and his staff of business development consultants help members plan projects and then transition to their new or bigger quarters. But the 15-year company veteran is also looking around the country at underserved areas where the True Value banner could be planted. Kirst is not above playing matchmaker between shuttered supermarkets or drug stores and True Value retailers looking for a new site. Thanks to the Retail Growth program, his dealers can walk into the bank or a leasing office with an attractive dowry.

(Continued on page 14)



# True Value

— COMPANY —

## Building momentum

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(Continued on page 14)



(Continued from page 13)

The package of incentives for eligible dealers combines discounts, favorable dating and/or additional inventory on opening stock orders; merchandising and store design services; True Value Rewards, the co-op's loyalty program, free for two years; and allowances for nine monthly circulars. Financing in the form of an interest free, 10-year note is available, and no monthly payments are required. Repayment comes from the members' annual patronage dividends.

There are requirements, of course. Members are expected to give the co-op point-of-sale data. They must participate in a variety of True Value programs. Stores must meet certain standards in lighting and signage. Expansion projects should add at least 5,000 square feet of selling space, and new stores must measure at least 10,000 square feet.

None of which should present a problem to Joe Pater, the St. Joseph dealer getting ready to open next month. The chemical company executive and boat racer took over a former Ace Hardware store belonging to his father-in-law and gutted the place. He put in new floors, ceilings and fixtures. True Value has provided the planograms for most of the 19,000-square-foot store, which contains a convenience food section and a place where contractors can sit down and enjoy their morning coffee and doughnuts.

Pater also wants to attract customers from the marinas along Lake Michigan with an unusually large fastener section.

"We want to be the [best] destination within 50 miles for fasteners," he said. With True Value's help, Pater has drawn a demographic bead on the upper-middle class residents of St. Joseph, who like their green lawns and their summer barbecues. Pater True Value is planning a lawn and garden section with separate "coves" for outdoor power equipment, long-handled tools, garden chemicals and other product categories. Pater is also putting in a large Grill Zone program. "We ordered almost every Weber grill they offered," he said.

This is exactly what True Value's CEO wants to hear. Heidemann says he wants his members to be looking at things through the eyes of the consumer, to try and figure out what will draw him or her to a small hardware store instead of a big box.

"I think we compete very well in the core categories as far as breadth of assortment," he said. "I think we're working on standards that will provide an atmosphere that is a more pleasant shopping experience than it would be in a big box."

True Value started the year in good financial shape, with revenues of \$2.05 billion for 2006 and earnings of \$72.8 million. Although sales were essentially flat over the last fiscal year, the Chicago-based buying group—whose divisions also include Grand Rental Station, Taylor Rental, Party Central, Home & Garden Showplace and Induserve Supply—posted a 53 percent gain in profits, its highest since 1988. Improved annual performance helped reduce year-end debt by 25.6

percent to \$144.5 million.

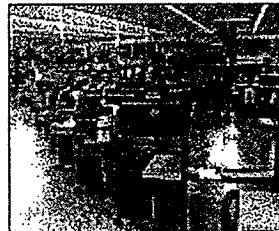
And while the co-op's unit count has slipped from a high of 6,000 during 2006 to about 5,600-plus currently, the company said that the majority of stores lost were underperforming, and the co-op's focus is profitability for its members—not quantity.

Heidemann is focused on making the company a "world class wholesaler with a strong retail focus, growing profitably," a phrase he coined while addressing members at the 2006 fall market in Las Vegas. He reiterated that message in a recent interview with HCN.

"I guess the key message is, we have a clear focus on improving our overall business, both from a retail standpoint and a wholesale standpoint," he said. On the corporate side, this includes reducing the cost of goods and services while emphasizing variety of product and on-time delivery. For example, chief merchandising officer Steve Mahurin and his team completed 33 product line reviews in 2006 and have now come up with nearly 90 Certified True Blue Assortments, further



Joe Pater (left), is planning a large Grill Zone program with Weber grills for Pater True Value, which will open in April in St. Joseph, Mich.



The fifth-generation hardware dealer opened a store this past January — on the west side of Manhattan — where he bought an expensive piece of real estate, remodeled an old 84 Lumber and relocated his sixth hardware store.

Waters is forging ahead with assistance from the

Retail Growth program and has identified an old supermarket, where he intends to carve out 18,000 square feet of retail selling space for his seventh store. His target opening date is June 1.

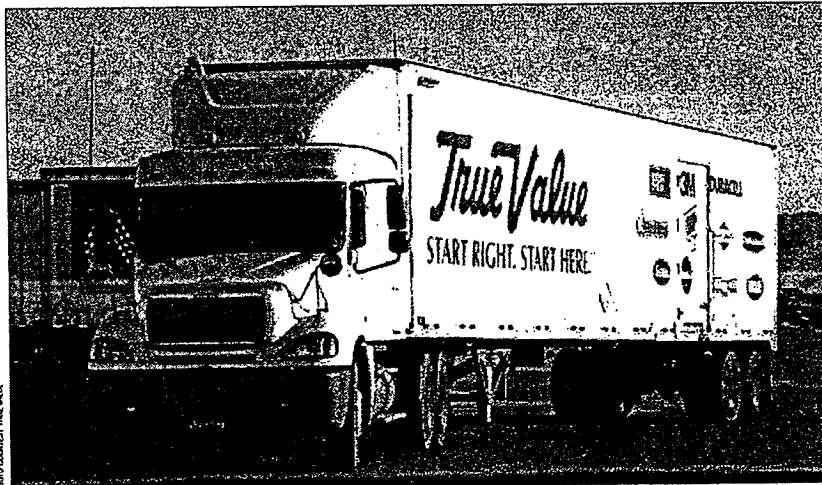
"This will be our second brand new store in a year," observed Waters. "The Retail Growth initiative is going to make it a lot easier to swallow, because we just swallowed hard."

Waters doesn't need much coaching from True Value on setting action plans or timetables for opening new stores. But for many dealers, making the transition from one to two stores involves a new set of skills they have to develop.

"They're becoming a business operator rather than a store manager,"

said Kirst, the Retail Growth director. "What they do and how they do it changes drastically."

As the Retail Growth program evolves, True Value will try to address issues like this, Kirst said. Already there are plans for a market seminar on store hierarchy: how to draw up an organizational tree, write job descriptions and set training schedules.



True Value's "Start Right. Start Here." campaign is branded on its trucks to raise consumer awareness.

enhancing the competitiveness and quality of True Value's retail offering. (see story, page 24)

True Value hopes the "Start Right. Start Here." branding campaign will continue to boost consumer awareness, while True Value Rewards, which has now been adopted by more than 500 stores and includes 2 million registered customers, will give consumers an added reason to shop their neighborhood stores.

On the retail side, a comprehensive approach to Visual Merchandising is helping retailers showcase the right products in the right places to help drive sales. True Value management is also helping implement a new POS system in smaller stores, providing more than 1,000 online training courses members can access at their own pace and helping stores price their goods appropriately in their specific markets. There's also a new store prototype, which is expected to be unveiled at the fall-market. The co-op describes it as, "What a True Value store should look like in the 21st Century."

Jim Waters from Junction City, Kan., would be a good candidate for one of these formats. Waters is working on his seventh store, to be located on the east side of Manhattan, Kan.

### Quick Stat

## \$2.05 billion

True Value's wholesale revenues in 2006, up slightly from \$2.04 billion in 2005. The co-op's profits jumped 53 percent to 72.8 million.

Source: True Value



## True Value rears the next generation of retailers

By Lisa Girard and Brae Canlen

*It's sometimes referred to as passing the torch or handing off the baton. Every year, an increasing number of True Value store owners bring their children on board as they modernize and/or expand their businesses. This next generation is often college educated, computer literate and full of ideas to update the operation in terms of product, systems and merchandising. HCN caught up with three different retailers — in Illinois, California and Arizona — whose children have stepped in with modern-day technology and savvy to update their family's businesses. Here are their stories.*

### A&G Hardware

Gillespie, Ill.

Chris Smalley could be called a modern day prodigal son. In 1999, at the age of 18, he left the comfort of his parents' small town hardware business in Gillespie, Ill., to check out life in the big city of St. Louis. He wanted to pursue a career in information technology and worked for four years for a brokerage firm and then another two selling cell phones. By early 2006, however, he'd had enough of city life and decided to return home — and to the family business.

"I lived in the city for six years, and it was a little bit of an adjustment after growing up in a small town," the 26-year-old Smalley said. "I learned a lot about marketing and advertising, what works and what doesn't. I worked for a small cell phone company, and I saw their failures and successes. It always comes down to this: if you treat people well and offer them something they need, it usually turns out well."

Smalley marks the third generation of family members to own and operate the business, which was founded in 1971 by Art Steinbaugh and Chris's grandmother Gladys Steinbaugh — hence the name "A&G Hardware." By 1976, the Steinbaughs had outgrown their 2,000-square-foot downtown location and moved to an old grocery store with four times the space on the

(Continued on page 18)



Gene Smalley (left) with his son Chris, who returned home from big city life to work at his family's store.



From left, founders Jerry and Glenda Bryant operate True Value Home Center of Oakhurst, Calif., with daughter-in-law Theresa, grandson Austin, daughter Denise Rowan, son Paul, daughter-in-law Adrienne and son Alan.

### True Value Home Center

Oakhurst, Calif.

Having your two sons working as general managers in the family business is considered an ideal situation for most dealers. Add in an adult daughter who runs the housewares department, and two daughters-in-law handling payroll, accounting, IT and legal issues, and then what do you have? True Value Home Center in Oakhurst, Calif.

Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Oakhurst is a former Gold Rush town with one main highway and approximately 15,000 people. Thousands of tourists drive through it each year on their way to the south entrance of Yosemite National Park. But many of the locals live in Oakhurst and its surrounding communities so they can commute to jobs in Fresno, which is 39 miles away.

"When I was a teenager, we used to drive to Fresno just to go to Taco Bell," recalled Alan Bryant, 36, who began working full-time in his parents' hardware store right out of high school. Bryant worked at various jobs, and along the way, took online courses in retail management and attended training sessions

(Continued on page 19)

### Florence True Value Hardware

Florence, Ariz.

Earlier this century, Florence (Ariz.) True Value Hardware owner Russ Woodmansee used old-fashioned cash registers to ring up customers, and his wife, Cheryl, banged out monthly statements on a typewriter, taking about a day and a half to record all the transactions.

Thanks to the input from the third generation of family retailers, times have changed.

Linsey Woodmansee-Nelson — daughter of Russ and Cheryl and granddaughter of the company's founders Woody and Beverly Woodmansee — graduated from Arizona State University in 2003 with a degree in education. She decided to get involved in the family business instead of becoming a teacher. Linsey encouraged her parents to bring in bar-code scanners for the cashiers and a computer system for the store's operation — both of which have helped them run a much smoother business.

"Being able to scan items quicker, checking for theft and returns — just being able to see what's selling and how much is selling — those have all been real positive for us," said Russ. "It also helps us to get rid of dogs that aren't selling and to double up inventory and shelf space for stuff we're out of every week."

As for Cheryl, it now takes her about an hour to do the monthly statements for both Florence True Value and the Woodmansee's other store, which is

(Continued on page 22)



Linsey Woodmansee-Nelson inspired her parents to bring new technology into their stores.

# True Value®

COMPANY

(Continued from page 16)  
outskirts of Gillespie. That was also the year they joined the True Value co-op and that Gladys's son, Gene Smalley, and his wife, Roganne, moved back to the area to join the business. They all worked together until 1987, when the Smalleys — Chris's parents — bought out the

Steinbaughs and continued the expansion.

"It seems the younger people want to expand more than the older people," Gene said. "You can't stop growing or trying to change and make it in this market."

In the years since Gene and Roganne took over the business, the

store has grown from annual sales of \$250,000 to almost \$700,000. And that kind of growth has been hard to come by, given the fact that Gillespie's population numbers about 4,000. "It's hard to expand rapidly with only a small area to draw from. You can't do things overnight unless you have a golden spoon in your mouth," he said. "We're a small store, but we're growing, and we've had to change over the times with what we carry and trying to be competitive."

In the old days, A&G stocked everything from appliances and lawn mowers to housewares and bicycles. But the Smalleys have been forced — because of big box competition — to abandon those categories to two Wal-Marts within an eight-mile radius and a Home Depot about 20 miles away. Instead, they're offering a full line of hardware items, a Just Ask Rental, a UPS drop-off, a repair department and other services.

"We've had to progress more into customer service oriented things," Gene explained, "like propane and rental, package express, window repair, paint color matching and dry cleaning."

#### Dry cleaning?

Not your typical hardware store fare, but when the Smalleys were approached two years ago by the owner of a dry cleaning store about 10 miles away and asked if they would be interested in acting as a drop-off area, they decided to give it a shot.

"It's really a neat way to get people we haven't seen before who wouldn't normally come into the store," Chris said. "You get them in the store twice: They come in once to drop it off and another time to pick it up. So that's two times you get to see that person that may have never come in otherwise."

"We thought we'd give it a try, and it's worked out a lot better than we anticipated," Gene added. "It's grown and grown in just two years, and it's getting bigger. All those little things added together are what I'm talking about with customer service."

In the six years Chris was away, A&G's clientele went from mostly homeowners to about 50-50 between DIY and professional. "Since I came back, with rental and expanded electrical and plumbing, it seems like we have a lot more contractor-type business," he said.

Since returning to the fold, the younger Smalley has helped put in True Value's new "Rock Solid" point of sale system and has transformed A&G's approach to advertising. "We're not putting dead ads in newspapers that don't seem to draw business," he explained. "We recently

"I worked for a small cell phone company, and I saw their failures and successes. It always comes down to this: if you treat people well and offer them something they need, it usually turns out well."

— CHRIS SMALLEY,  
third generation family member  
to own and operate A&G Hardware

did a TV commercial on the local cable company, which brought some new people in."

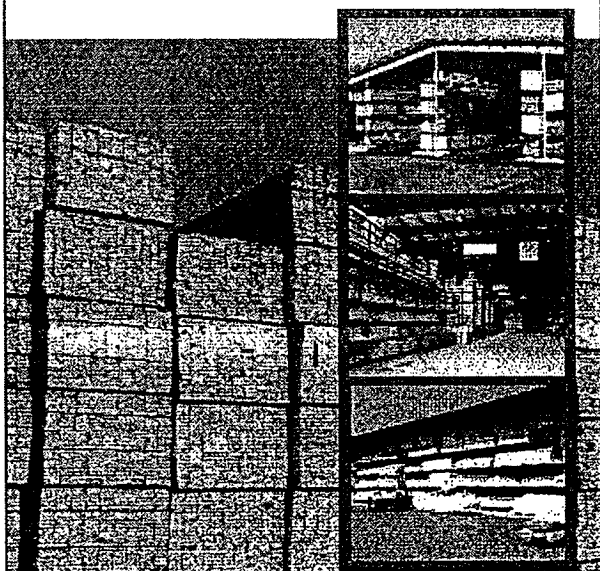
The UPS shipping service has also boosted the business. "I think that also helps us reach a new generation in the sense of a lot of younger people are selling on eBay, and they want to ship these things," Chris said. "A lot of times we offer advice on how to save on shipping. Just having a knowledge about those kinds of things helps your customer service and draws a new customer base as well."

Gene has begun to cut back on his hours, allowing his son to take more of an active role in the store's management and to seek out new opportunities. "We're always looking to add something," Chris said. "I don't know if there are too many True Value stores where you can drop off your dry cleaning, get a gallon of paint and rent a piece of equipment. I think that's what really separates us from a Wal-Mart or other retail stores."



A&G's dry cleaning business offers two opportunities to convert new customers: when they drop off, and when they pick up.

## NEED A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD?

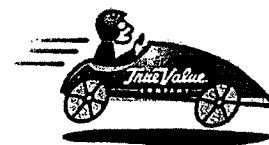


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(Continued from page 16) during True Value markets and at the co-op's Chicago headquarters. Eventually, he became the store's GM.

Now Oakhurst has its own Taco Bell, but Bryant is watching local residents drive to Fresno to buy home improvement supplies from Home Depot and Lowe's. Alan, his brother Paul, and the rest of the Bryant family just opened a 30,000-square-foot home center right outside of Oakhurst to capture that business and protect their existing market share. It's a bit of a gamble, and the new store will require the two brothers to redefine their roles. But Oakhurst is changing, and the Bryants are ready to change with it.

"We've realized that we need to step back from the floor and concentrate more on setting business goals," said Alan, who will co-manage the home center with his older brother Paul. Up until now, the two brothers have operated separate stores: Alan at the old 19,000-square-foot home center that just closed, and Paul at the family's other location in Oakhurst, a one-acre pro yard called H&L Lumber.

Paul, age 38, didn't join the family business right away. "I left the area for about a year after high school, sowed some wild oats and then came back," he said. Like Alan, Paul was required to work as an unpaid apprentice to a home builder if he wanted to work in the family business. After that stint, he started doing deliveries at the lumberyard. "I was low man on the totem pole," he recalled.

Paul worked his way up to general manager of H&L Lumber. Late last year, he transferred to the new home center to help get it ready for its soft opening in December. Three long-time managers at the yard have been moved into leadership positions.

While Alan's personality is outgoing — he's a former NRHA "Young Retailer of the Year" — Paul is more

reserved, and more accustomed to working with contractors than homeowners. After the new home center is fully operational, Paul hopes to add separate sections of building materials for contractors and DIYers, as

well as more finished wood products. Alan foresees a garden center.

The new store added more square footage to almost every department, including the housewares domain of sister Denise. The eldest of the Bryant

siblings, the 40-year old twin (her sister Delores lives near San Jose) got married, changed her last name to Rowan, had two kids and started working in the restaurant business. But managing a dining room meant nightly

separations from her daughters. The family business beckoned.

Rowan said she likes working with her brothers. "We don't fight like we did when we were kids," she observed. Family

(Continued on page 22)

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## What's in store for True Value? New stores, better stores

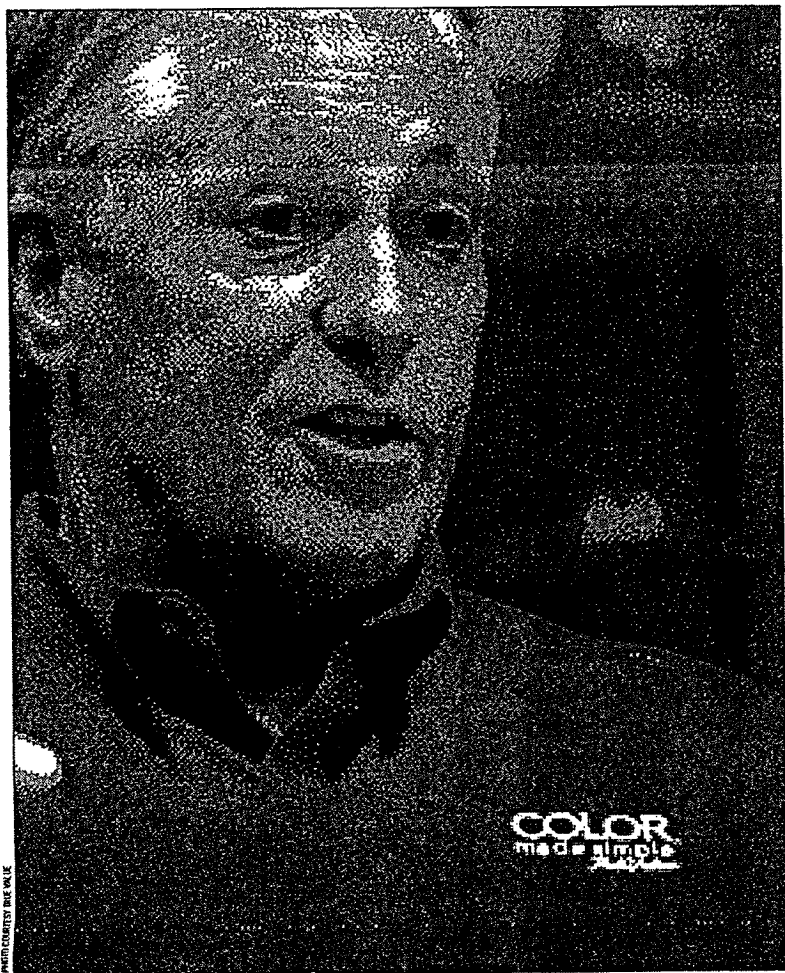
By Lisa Girard

When he was hired to lead the co-op in June 2005, True Value CEO Lyle Heidemann was seen as an executive with plenty of industry credibility – 37 years of experience at Sears. That credibility was just what the co-op needed, after financial miscues and accounting errors in the late 1990s preceded a period of mass defections for the co-op.

Heidemann was described as the man to take True Value to the next level. One indication of his success is the 2006 financial statement, which

reported earnings for the co-op of \$72.8 million, an increase of 52.9 percent. Granted, much of that growth can be attributed to one-time legal matters and facility sales, but even excluding unusual items, the profits jumped nearly 9.2 percent.

Many challenges remain. Among them is his mission to make every one of the co-op's 5,600-plus stores "the best hardware store in town." He explained the co-op's recent success, as well as his ambitious plans for the future, in this interview with HCN.



**Home Channel News:** How would you describe True Value's performance in 2006?

**Lyle Heidemann:** I think we did very, very well. For the second year in a row we had a sales increase. Comp-store sales were better than our overall sales, our stores continue to do well from a profit standpoint, and we will have one of the best profit years in the company's history. Our debt will be the lowest it's been in almost 30 years. I think we've done a good job of managing our expenses, managing our cost to members and improving our overall sales performance.

**HCN:** You said at the fall market that your internal mission is to 'be a world class wholesaler with a strong retail focus, growing profitably.' How are you accomplishing that?

**LH:** We look at that as three legs on a stool. First, we have a number of initiatives in place to improve upon our internal support of our stores, which would fall under being a world class wholesaler. We are our members' biggest vendor, and as a result of that, they have expectations from us to be a very good vendor — or wholesaler — in areas like cost of goods, variety of product, on-time delivery, fair price of merchandise and fill rates.

From a strong retail focus standpoint, we see ourselves helping our members improve their overall retail execution. Again, we're looking at it more from a perspective of, what does the ultimate consumer want from one of our stores, from a shopping experience standpoint, from a product and selection standpoint and from a service standpoint? And how

“From a growing standpoint, our focus is on how we can help our members grow profitably. ... And we believe if we do a great job helping our members grow, they will buy more from the co-op, and the co-op will be successful.”

— LYLE HEIDEMANN, President and CEO, True Value



do we help our members through best practices and through initiatives so they can deliver on that promise to the ultimate consumer?

From a growing standpoint, our focus is on how we can help our members grow profitably. A year ago January, when we restructured our field organization, our entire focus was to help our members grow their top-line sales and their bottom line profit. And we believe if we do a great job helping our members grow, they will buy more from the co-op, and the co-op will be successful.

**HCN:** Are there any other programs you've put in place to try to achieve these goals?

**LH:** We continue to work on simplifying our business model to our members, so that it's easy for them to do business with us. In 2006, we implemented the first phase of what we call simplified ordering, making it easier for them to communicate to us an order of their promotional goods every month. In 2007, we will complete that with phase two, which will make it very streamlined for them to purchase goods from us. Today, we have 13 different order types. At the end of this year, we'll have that down to two order types.

We continue to automate our distribution centers, which makes our service to our members better and improves our pick accuracy — which is now 99.8 percent — so they can count on the fact that when they order something that the order is going to come in accurately.

I'm not sure how many other wholesalers do this, but last year we started a customer satisfaction survey where we survey 100 members every month, which means that through the course of the year we'll survey 25 percent of our core hardware stores on a key set of initiatives that support wholesale, retail and growth. We've set very high standards for ourselves in terms of how well our members think we're doing.

**HCN:** What are you doing to improve things from a retail perspective?

**LH:** Here, we continue to work on initiatives that help our members improve their profitability. We worked with over 1,500 stores last year, helping them improve their bottom line margin in their stores through the pricing of goods, working with them to

do competitive shops based on their competitors in their marketplace and looking for opportunities where they could improve their margins.

We implemented a new POS system for our smaller stores so they could economically move into a better technology. We automated our training and put that online for our members, so they or their associates can go online and select from well over 1,000 different courses to continue to improve their knowledge from a retail standpoint and from a product standpoint. And we continue to increase the number of stores that are on our Loyalty program, True Value Rewards.

**HCN:** And how about the way the stores look?

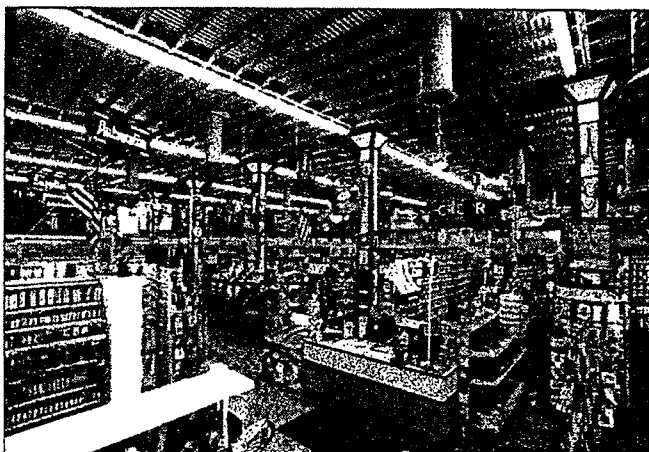
**LH:** For 2007, we're working on a new store type, looking at putting together a store that we can share with our members as what a True Value store should look like in the 21st century. We continue to work on new presentation standards for our stores to improve the atmosphere for the female customer that shops our stores. We continue to look at line extensions and opportunities for a hardware store to expand its revenues. There are product categories that we can compete with the big boxes in and, in some cases, better than the big boxes.

**HCN:** Are you actively trying to add stores to the True Value fold?

**LH:** We announced at the fall market a growth initiative with our members that would help them if they had a desire to grow, either through additional stores or to take an existing store and add square footage to it. We provided a financial package that would help them be able to fulfill that desire, and we've had very good response from members on that.

**HCN:** About how many members have taken advantage of the growth initiative?

**LH:** We've had well over 100 members who have shown interest. Some have immediate interest: We're in the process of opening some this first quarter. We have some that will open up in the second and third quarters. We have some that are interested, and we are in the process of helping them find locations. So we had very good early response from our members. We're not quite ready yet to say how many we will start opening on an annual basis, but our



Florence True Value Hardware in Florence, Ariz.

goal is that by mid-year 2007 we will have developed a pipeline of stores and will start opening up a store a week or expanding a store a week.

**HCN:** True Value went through some tough times in the late 1990s / early 2000s. If you had to pick a moment or event when True Value got back on the right track, what would it be?

**LH:** I'm not sure there's one single defining moment, because I think whenever you have personal or financial difficulties, there are a series of things that get you back on track. Since I've been here, if I were to look back at a couple of dates, one would have been at our fall market 2006, when as I was walking the floor, a long list of members stopped me and said they felt the co-op was back on track. I think that was very, very encouraging for the entire organization. And I think the second

thing was at the end of November, when we signed a new five-year bank agreement. It's a good feeling when the financial community has enough confidence in your performance over the last couple of years — and what your five-year plan is — to reduce your interest rate and, in fact, want to provide you with funding. I think that tells us we're on the right track.

**HCN:** Please complete this thought: I will consider 2007 a successful year for True Value if ...

**LH:** I'll consider 2007 successful if we begin opening new stores or expanding stores at an acceptable pace, if we generate comp-store sales increases both at retail and wholesale, if we continue to reduce the daily cost of goods and services to our members, and if we provide our members with a satisfactory patronage dividend. If we do all of

## Quick Stat

# 1,500

Number of True Value members last year that underwent local-market price and margin consultations through a co-op initiative designed to improve profitability.



Source: True Value

# True Value<sup>®</sup>

COMPANY

(Continued from page 19)  
gatherings are a little heavy on shop talk, she admitted, "until Mom puts a halt to it."

Parents Glenda and Jerry Bryant bought H&L Lumber in 1986 and opened True Value Home Center 12 years later. They are both still active in the business. Jerry works on the floor, while Glenda runs the back office with her two daughters-in-law. Adrienne, married to Alan, is the office manager and computer software specialist. Theresa, Paul's wife, handles payroll and personnel. A former paralegal who tired of the Fresno commute, Theresa now applies her skills to debt collection and other legal issues that arise.

Although everyone has their distinct jobs — and personalities — the family collaborated on the new store, which took five years

to site and then build. Their old store was located on the main highway, above a popular strip mall that contained the post office and a supermarket. But their parking lot was often full, and cars would frequently drive through and keep on going.

"We knew that if we didn't open a bigger store, someone else would," Alan said. Unfortunately, the only suitable parcel space they could find was just off the main highway. "That's a big concern of ours," noted Alan.

As a member of True Value's marketing council, Alan is no stranger to promotional campaigns. The new slogan for the store, to be used in circulars and newspaper ads, is "Thirty seconds away!"

As true believers in the True Value brand, the Bryants have kept their family name off their stores,

a tradition their sons and daughters intend to carry forward. Although the school bus drops off most of their grandchildren at the front door of the hardware store, the younger ones are already talking about taking over the operation one day. Nash, the 10-year-old son of Alan and Adrienne, thinks he has the people skills to carry it off. The eldest grandchild, 20-year-old Austin, has already joined the business as a full-time employee. The son of Paul and Theresa has learned to do pretty much everything on the retail floor, according to his grandparents.

Patriarch Jerry Bryant has a job for any of the grandchildren who want to make a career out of hardware retailing. "If they want to work in the business, they'll be afforded that pleasure," he said.

(Continued from page 16)  
located about 45 minutes away in Gilbert, and is run by their oldest son, Bruce — also an ASU graduate (2000).

Another son, Brent, is scheduled to graduate from ASU in May, after which he will assume the position of assistant manager at the Gilbert store.

"My parents have been in the business so long and have everything down to a tee, and I think I took a lot from their training, which was awesome," 25-year-old Linsey said. "I think the biggest thing my brothers and I have brought to them is the technology. Second, we've brought a new aspect as far as the visual merchandising of the store. We put up new signage, reworked the merchandise on the shelves."

Russ started in the hardware business by working with his parents, who opened their first store — a

combination auto parts/hardware store — in Phoenix in 1973 and followed with similar stores in Tempe and Mesa.

When he was looking to branch out to his own location in 1991, the family's True Value rep found this space in Florence, which lies about mid-way between Phoenix and Tucson. Russ had never even been to this rural town, which is home to between 4,000 and 5,000 year-round residents — a number that balloons up to 10,000 to 12,000 when the snowbirds arrive in winter.

Florence True Value Hardware is situated in a charming old building with original wood floors, a tin ceiling, three working streetlights and a fireman's pole. The 90-year-old building is on the state's historical register.

Florence also happens to be the Pinal County seat as well as home to Arizona State

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Prison, whose 2,000-plus prison employees make up a small percentage of the customer base. The bulk of Florence True Value's business comes from local residents and winter visitors, while about 30 percent is commercial, coming from the prison and the county offices.

"You have to have contracts with them, and they buy the majority of their stuff on emergency," Russ said. "In other words, it's stuff that they need right now, so you better have it. Their maintenance people don't have time to run into town to a commercial supply house."

Linsey became involved in the business during high school, working weekends, vacations and summers. During her college years, she was able to step up her hours and after graduating in 2003, came to work full-time: "If you can call 60 or 70 hours a week full-time," her father joked.

What the younger Woodmansees have brought to the stores is technology, which their dad calls Florence True Value's biggest asset. "True Value came out with store enhancement and remerchandising programs where they would match funds to get stores to jump on board," he said. "We knew we needed to do it, but I knew I wasn't computer literate, and my wife isn't computer literate. So we decided that if Linsey is willing to bite the bullet and take it on and basically teach us, then we'll do it."

"My kids say we went from the Stone Age to the Space Age all in one fell swoop," Russ continued. "I would to this day probably hate this system if it wasn't for the kids because there's just too much still that we don't comprehend."

But the results have been undeniable. Florence True Value has seen double-digit sales increases in the last two years. Things have been going so well that the company decided to add 6,000 square feet to the store last summer, bringing the total square footage to 16,000. This includes a 2,500-square-foot Just Ask Rental, as well as expanded plumbing, paint and hardware departments.

The store also does well with gift items and knick-

knacks, particularly those with an Arizona theme, such as miniature cactus plants, cactus candies, scorpion suckers and ironwood eagles. "We're basically the visitor's center in town," Russ said. "Most of our sales come from the winter visitors."

It was the kids' idea to put in the Just Ask Rental, and it was also their idea to renovate a 3,500-square-foot attached building and turn it into a combination gift shop and ice cream parlour/sandwich shoppe. They hope this old fashioned appeal will give

them even more of an edge when it comes to competing with the big boxes, which include a Wal-Mart that's about eight miles away and a Home Depot and Lowe's, about 25 miles in either direction.

"Cheryl and I want to slowly start to back away and give

them more control," Russ said. "I hope they will continue to grow the business with some niche departments they want to add. Their youthful marketing, merchandising and technology ideas should put energy back into the hardware business."

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# True Value.

COMPANY

## The look and feel: True Value's re-merchandising strategy

By Andrew M. Carlo

First impressions matter in this business. The fact is not lost on the merchandising experts at True Value, who are expanding efforts to make a strong and immediate connection to the consumer.

With profits and sales on the mend in recent years, True Value has recognized that empowering its member-dealers with the right

merchandising playbook can lead to stronger stores and higher sales.

An important chapter in that playbook is the "store typical" initiative. For 2007, the co-op is designing a new "store typical" with the intention of demonstrating to members what a True Value store should look like in the 21st century. The prototype should be ready for an unveiling at the co-op's fall market in

Denver beginning Sept. 27. The move is an extension of steps taken in prior years that focused on sourcing the right merchandise for the right price while showcasing it with the correct signage and display.

Last fall, True Value turned its attention toward revamping store design through Visual Merchandising, which was an expansion of the co-op's Impulse Merchandising program. Visual Merchandising divides the typical True Value store into four zones: the entrance, a main power aisle, in-line assortments and the checkout area. The program includes factors like lighting, as well as the way endcaps are rotated and assimilated into the in-line product mix.

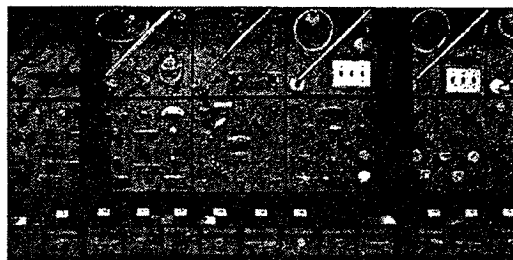
But appearance is only part of the equation — you also need the right mix of products. And in this field, Steve Mahurin, True Value's senior vp and chief merchandising officer, has been an agent of change since he joined the co-op three years ago. The line reviews that he championed from the start will continue in 2007.

When Mahurin arrived from Home Depot, he found product lines that had become stale while not always offering members the best margins. Essentially, Mahurin set about re-writing some of True Value's playbook and began to instill more of a retail philosophy into the Chicago co-op's overall merchandising methodology. He shook up the company's buying roster and began a line review process that remains ongoing.

"At the end of the day, we are acting more like a retailer than a wholesaler because that's who we are," Mahurin said. "We have 5,000 stores out there selling product."

True Value's top merchant foresees the line review process continuing for the next few years. Last year about 33 categories were reviewed, while another 40 are slated for inspection this year. About 50 percent of True Value's overall product base has gone through a line review process in the past three years.

Prior to Mahurin's arrival, True Value had not conducted



A display in True Value's Cary, Ill., distribution center reflects a focus on decorative hardware.

reviews by categories, leaving some lines dusty and stagnant. That was the case with power tool accessories, including bits, driving bits and circular saw blades, which had not received a review for some time.

The review process has allowed the co-op, at times, to introduce private label products and categories where a national brand did not exist on the shelf. Other times, True Value has needed a different price point. For example, True Value will introduce new in-room air conditioning units this year, expanding into larger BTU units as well through its Westpointe brand.

Poor performances by vendors, such as low fill rates, or changes in management that could result in a company no longer wanting to partner with True Value, have also led to reviews.

Against the backdrop of basic retail merchandising, technology will also play an increasingly important role for the co-op.

By the end of this year, True Value will have implemented

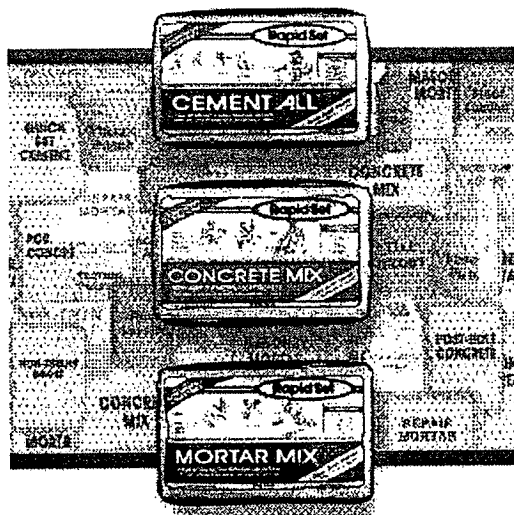
the system internally. The next step is to bring the internal system to the co-op's stores, a process that will probably occur by the third quarter of 2008 at dealers with the ability to embrace it.

There have been industry murmurings that True Value was casting aside brand names and pricier items for low-cost replacements. That's not the case, according to Mahurin.

"We are a national brand company," he said. "Our stores want national brands because our customers want national brands."

Essentially, True Value wants its members to have the most up-to-date merchandise in the industry at competitive price points. But that does not mean True Value has been willing to part ways with major brands. "When a company is not willing to work with True Value, sometimes we need to make changes," Mahurin said. "But we are not getting rid of the brands. You need those products."

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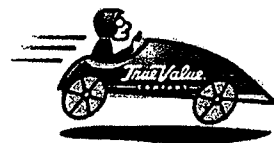
Quick Stat

18,000

The number of new skus introduced in 2006 to True Value's warehouse and direct-to-store offering.

Source: True Value





In 2006 True Value added nearly 600 new suppliers and more than 18,000 new skus to its warehouse and through direct-to-store offerings.

In cases where there is not significant savings, True Value has chosen to remain with domestic suppliers. Regardless of the packaging on a product, most of the product itself was being produced overseas, despite sometimes having a brand name.

"There is a pressure to increase profits. And you can't blame Wal-Mart," Mahurin said, regarding the need to source products in low cost overseas factories. "You can blame the Street and investors. It's a vicious cycle."

While brands are a key to the game plan, private label is an important role player. True Value's retail distribution centers now stock more than 8,153 private label skus, including the company's Baypointe, Westpointe, Grill Zone, Master Mechanic, Master Electrician, Master Painter and Green Thumb brands.

By providing members with access to affordable, up-to-date assortments, the company is able to augment national brands with a good-better-best sell-up strategy.

Two years ago, the company began updating its private label Master Mechanic power and hand tool lines for the first time in years, offering new features, accessories and prices.

In addition to the major strategic initiatives, Mahurin faces basic retail blocking and tackling. One area where the co-op is making moves is decorative hardware. Mahurin wants to see all member stores become dominant players in fasteners, decorative hardware and builders' hardware. A solid fasteners assortment is available to members, but builders' hardware will be expanded into new assortments this year. The co-op will soon look to get member feedback of new hardware options including new cabinet hardware and locksets.

"Today's customers are looking for new finishes — stainless steel or brushed nickel for example," Mahurin

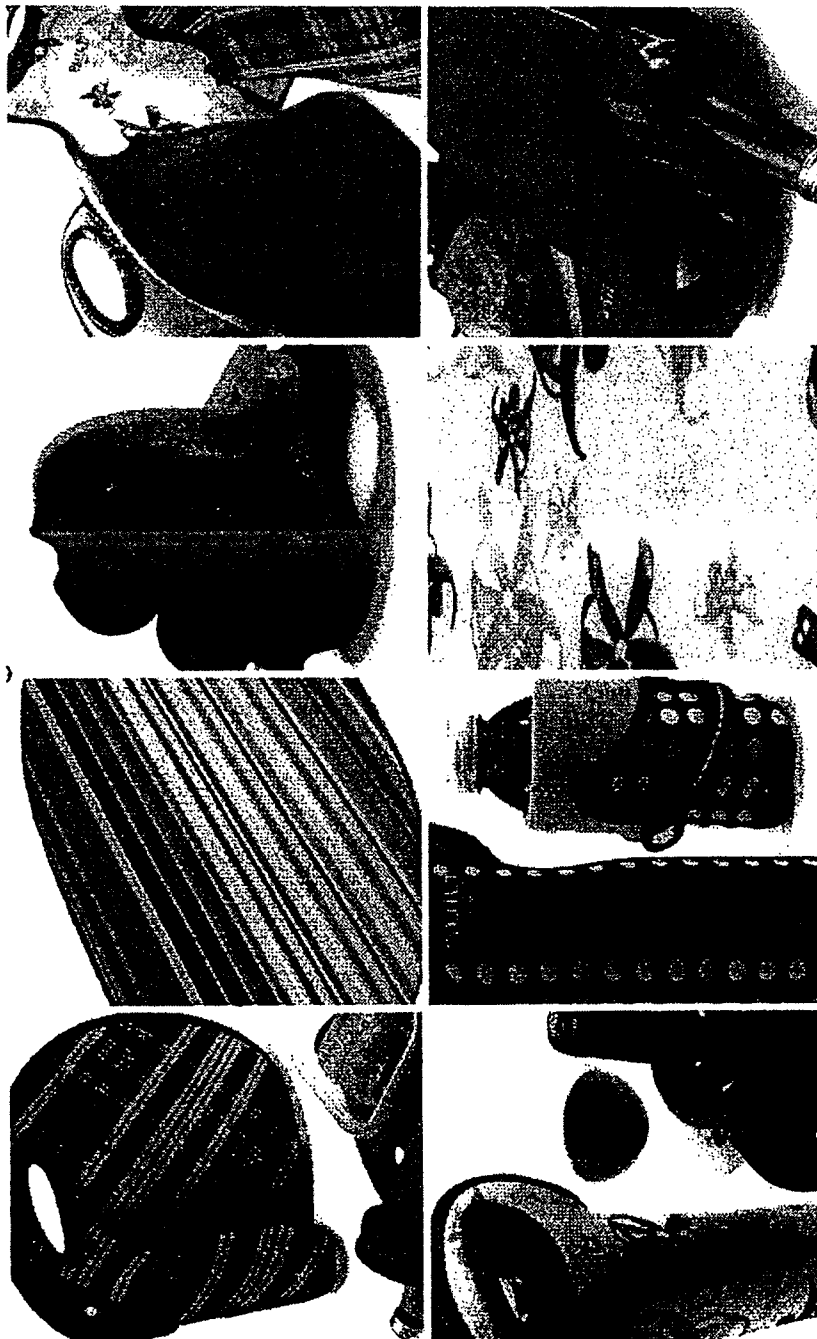
said. "We feel we need to be dominant in these categories."

A new paint program will be tested this summer, giving dealers options, including a regional paint that can be displayed alongside premium

and private label options. Combined with decorative hardware, dealers will have a one-two punch to become more of a destination location, particularly for female shoppers.

With the right assortments, the Chicago-based co-op now wants member stores to showcase the right products in the right places in order to drive sales. "We continue to improve the atmosphere for

the female customers that shop our store," said president and CEO Lyle Heidemann. "We continue to look at line extensions and opportunities for a hardware store to expand its revenues."



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# True Value.

COMPANY

## Leveraging a foundation: 'Start Right. Start Here.'

By Kate Fazzini

True Value initiated some major marketing changes in 2006 — most notably, re-positioning its brand under the "Start Right. Start Here." campaign.

For Carol Wentworth, True Value's top marketing executive, unrolling the campaign was just the beginning to a stepped-up marketing program, including the launch of a consumer magazine and heightened Internet advertising.

"In the spring 2006 season, we converted to the brand-building campaign to communicate to the customer that if they started the project with us, they would end the project successfully," Wentworth said. "It was really speaking to the consumer experience in handling multiple projects throughout the year."

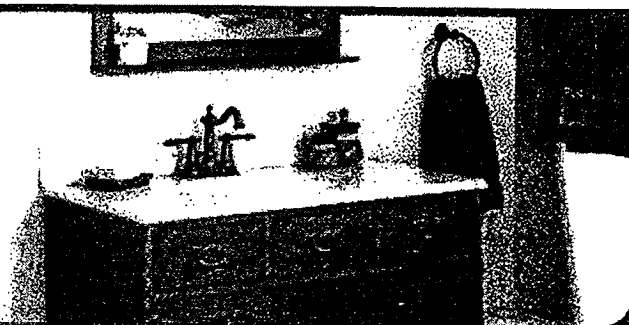
Through multimedia advertising, the "Start Right. Start Here." campaign generated nearly three times as much consumer interest in the spring of 2006, compared with True Value's marketing efforts in the previous fall, according to the company's research. Wentworth expects 2007 will represent a continuation of those efforts, with notable additions.

"Our consumer magazine will hit the newsstands by mid-March," Wentworth said.

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True Value's "Start Right. Start Here." campaign conveys the idea that consumers can receive expert advice at the co-op's stores.

"It's a new creative execution, a brand new traffic-driving element, in the same way as our Internet marketing campaign."

The "Start Right. Start Here." campaign represented a "major change" in the company's national advertising strategy, Wentworth said, particularly in better communicating the idea that "expert advice" is available at True Value stores.

"We really want to leverage the foundation we built in 2006. There will be more Internet [advertising]. We didn't do radio last year — we used cable networks, consumer magazines and online media in an effort to reach out to a younger demographic," she said.

The increased attention to Internet advertising will include starting a new "micro site" to drive traffic both to True Value's home page and True Value stores.

Additionally, the company plans new television advertisements "that will communicate product selection," Wentworth said.

True Value has identified the 25- to 34-year-old age group as a target in its newest multimedia marketing efforts. Wentworth said research into the demographics of True Value's core consumer shows that the most lucrative home improvement customers begin shopping in earnest at about the age of 25. True Value is aiming to grab those

consumers so that as they mature, they continue to maintain some loyalty to the True Value name.

"The media consumption habits of all U.S. consumers are changing but probably most rapidly in that age group,"

### Quick Stat

# 40%

The percentage of True Value customers described as "DIY enthusiasts" — spending \$2,800 or more per year on home improvement merchandise.

Source: True Value



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Wentworth said.

The "DIY enthusiast," as defined by True Value, racks up \$2,800 or more per year in home improvement merchandise and is a primary driver of True Value's sales volume, she said. This customer accounts for 40 percent of the co-op's business, she added.

"The industry talks about DIYers a lot, but the 'enthusiast' is uniquely a True Value segment type," she said.

Within that crucial 40 percent, demographics skew slightly toward women, 52 percent compared with 48 percent men. Eighty-eight percent of DIY enthusiasts are homeowners, and the majority of them have higher-than-average household income. Their projects are all over the map — plumbing, painting, landscaping and gardening — and so are their retailer choices, Wentworth said.

"They do shop all types of home improvement stores. They do shop big boxes and specialty stores, like lighting or flooring," she said.

The heavy competition for those most valuable customers led to several initiatives in 2006 that focused more energy on local store owners. Improved store circulars, better store-level marketing plans and new customer loyalty programs all were part of those efforts.

"Everything we're doing is really focused on building the True Value brand or helping the stores build better local brands," she said.

Dealer-members can go online and build their own ads, choose from two to three monthly circulars and can now swap out items that sell poorly in favor of those that sell well.

"Members can customize the circulars and switch-out by [climate] zones. If it's still not the right product assortments, different products, prices, pages are all available," she said.

To better aid dealer-members in gathering up-to-date data, the company field-tested a new program in 2006 to allow members to track their own transactions in relation to their advertising spending. More

than 1,000 members have used the "marketing planning tool" to look at how much they spend on marketing and how that spending compares to their stores' distribution.

As 2007 drives on, the real test of True Value's campaign will be in the eye of the consumer — so far, Wentworth said the company has been very happy by the amount of interest the

campaign has generated in the co-op.

"We've tried to build advertising that is relevant to the customer experience — and our research shows they found the message

very relevant, very important to them and their experience," Wentworth said. "And that is how we want to be differentiated, by showing them how we can solve their problems."

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## Emergency or not, distribution network takes center stage

By Ken Clark

There's an old saying in the logistics business — when things are going perfectly, hardly anyone notices.

That's not stopping True Value's logistics team, led by senior vp-logistics Mike Haining, from making steady improvements to the network. True Value's challenge of delivering the right product to the right location at the right

time is multiplied by a factor of 5,600-plus independent True Value retail locations worldwide. At the Chicago-based co-op, one of several logistics initiatives is even aimed at earning the recognition of members for distribution done well during natural disasters and other emergencies.

Haining points to both "day-in-day-out accuracy" and on-time delivery at well over

90 percent throughout the Ace system — numbers that bolster his belief that True Value is at the top of the field in logistics. When it comes to emergency delivery — "I think we're better," he said.

Major improvements in emergency response came in the last three years — through communication and preparation.

"The first thing that falls apart in these emergencies is communication," Haining said. "We have a very defined communication strategy, then we go through the drill to make sure we have the most current phone list."

Without that kind of approach, it's almost inevitable that the phone number you need is the one you don't have, he said.

Another best practice inserted into the system is an emergency response team that crosses all functions of the business and receives its authority at the highest level of the company. All in all, it's a team of 10 to 20 people who "sit down and coordinate the response on a national basis."



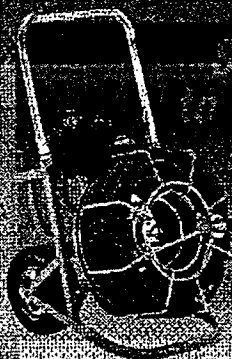
Source: True Value

### Quick Stat

# 99.8%

Percentage of pick-rate accuracy at DCs with upgraded warehouse management system.

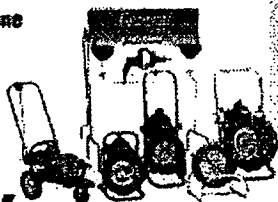
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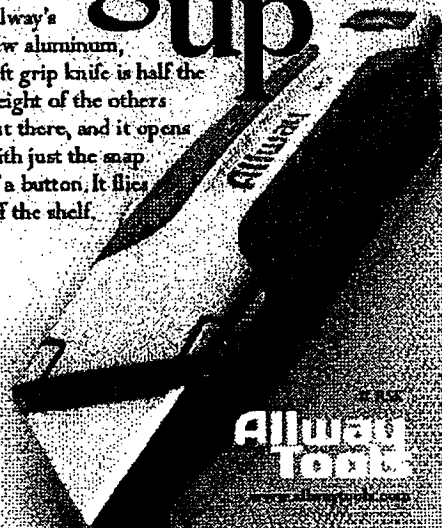
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Allway's new aluminum, soft grip knife is half the weight of the others out there, and it opens with just the snap of a button. It flies off the shelf.



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the day-to-day, including a major program called NPI — national productivity initiative. "Part of this is mapping out in detail the best practices," he said. "How do you pick a product? How do you store a product? Should you use conveyors? We've mapped out virtually thousands of process steps across the network at each individual facility."

True Value operates 12 regional distribution centers, each receiving new distribution system technologies that track every piece of merchandise as it is received, stocked, picked, shipped and delivered. At the six facilities where the new warehouse management system has been implemented, pick-rate accuracy runs about 99.8 percent, which is higher than the 99.4 percent at the other centers. Fill rates are also above 95 percent.

While pick-rate accuracy measures the accuracy of items picked in the warehouse, the fill-rate

True Value's warehouse management system has led to high accuracy in pick rates and fulfillment.





accuracy measures the matching of orders to deliveries and includes the additional element of item availability.

The co-op's service level rates are regarded as exceptional in the industry, Haining said.

Part of the recipe for success is simple: better lighting. True Value has upgraded the lighting in all of the facilities, at the same time lowering expenses by converting from halogen to T-8 fluorescent lighting. The facilities save \$100,000 to \$200,000 in utility costs per location every year while providing better light for the picking. The footcandles (a measure of light that falls on a given service) at the pick level increased to 35 to 40, up from about 20 before the switch.

Another initiative with a simple concept began in June 2005 — collapsible, full pallet totes, also called "unitotes" for their ability to handle all kinds of products in one big tote.

"The totes are very easy to load," he said. "You can't put everything in them, but they're very member-friendly. It somehow gets thousands of products with unequal dimensions somewhat unitized."

Among the more high-tech improvements is a warehouse management system that tracks items through bar code scanners: "every item in the warehouse is tracked from the time it is received to the time it is moved," Haining said.

Scanner data is gathered and managed through a radio frequency network.

Out on the road, the company installed a PeopleNet system across the

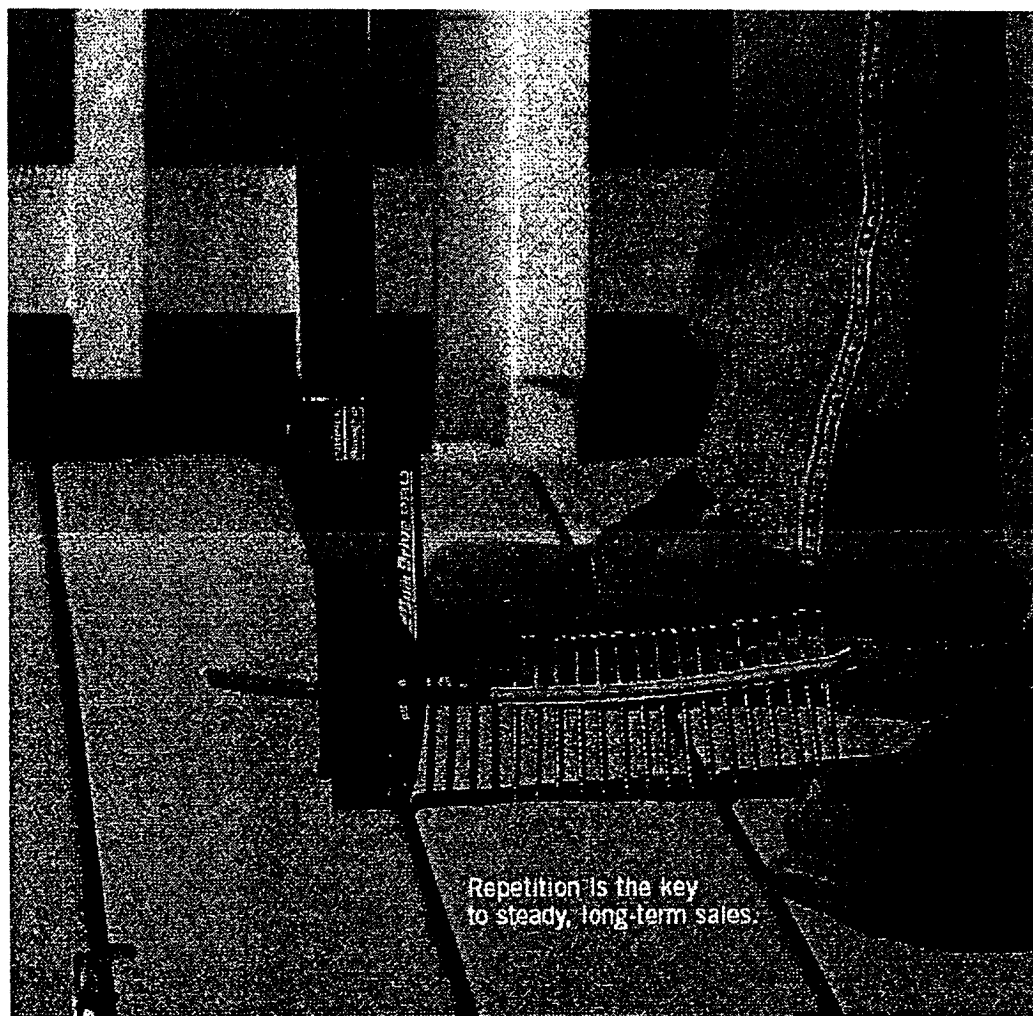
truck fleet — about 340 trucks (not counting some 900 active trailers). The system helps monitor driver performance, speed and safety and has played a role in the reduction of liabilities associated with

accidents. "Our over-the-road safety performance has been outstanding," Haining said. Another benefit of the PeopleNet system: "We can change en route, which is very helpful."

About 8 percent of stores — high volume stores or those conveniently located — are in the 24-hour range. The majority, 78 percent, are in the 24- to 36-hour window, he said. The

remote or low-volume remainder typically require longer.

"We strive to get the order-to-delivery cycle down as close to 24 hours as we can," he said.



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