



2024 Ballot Instruction Package

INSTRUCTION SHEET

Before filling out the rating forms attached, please be sure to read these instructions so evaluations will be fair and consistent

- 1) Rate only those suppliers with whom you are **currently** doing business.
- 2) Prior to voting, discuss each nominee **and** each category with others in your organization. Suggestions below also include ballot categories which may pertain to them.
 - *Purchasing Manager (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,15)
 - *Customer Service Manager (7,8,10,12,15)
 - *Accounting Personnel (1,2,3,4)
 - *President/CEO/GM (4,5,11)
 - *Sales Manager (3,4,5,7,9,10,12,13,15)
 - *Warehouse/Receiving Manager (1,8,9,13)
 - *Marketing Manager (3,6,7,12,15)
- 3) The rating system will consist of five (5) points:
 - Excellent.....5
 - Good.....4
 - Average.....3
 - Fair.....2
 - Poor.....1
 - A) Use these numbers...no fractions or decimal points.
 - B) **Do not use the number zero**
- 4) This year each voting category will be weighted according to its importance to you, the wholesale distributor. Weighting will be applied during the computer analysis of the scoring and will be structured as follows:

2.5:1	2:1	1.5:1	1:1
Profitability	Delivery	Marketing Assets	Participation in YEAR Exec Conf (not used if no event)
Channel Management	Invoicing	Sales Representatives	Participation in 2023 S.T.E.P.
	Vendor Program	Packaging/Shipping	P.O.P. Packaging
	Customer Support	Online Resources	
	Number System/UPC	Product & Warranty	

- 5) Use the following descriptions of each voting category for things to consider when voting.
 1. **DELIVERY**

Product availability on a timely, consistent basis is crucial to a W/D.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Are dated products shipped with adequate remaining shelf life?
- Does the supplier lead time meet your business needs?
- Does the supplier ship on a consistent, predictable basis, giving your purchasing people lead times on which they can depend?
- Do they ship with minimal backorders?
- Are backorders filled in a timely & efficient manner?
- Do they send orders free of errors?
- Do they have new product introductions available when promised?
- Do they always enclose an easy-to-find packing slip, allowing quick processing by the receiving department?
- Does the supplier work with distributor on freight discrepancies?
- Are multi-carton shipments noted as such on shipping labels and packing slips?

2. **INVOICING**

The wholesale distribution business is heavily transaction based. The smoother these transactions are executed, the more efficient and cost effective the administrative side becomes.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is the supplier's invoice in the same order as the distributor's purchase order?
- Does the supplier verify prices and terms on purchase orders and notify distributor of prices and terms that are incorrect?
- Does manufacturer support EDI or electronic invoicing?
- Does the supplier invoice accurately; are prices, payment and freight terms always correctly invoiced?
- Are invoices processed quickly to allow you proper processing time, including adequate time to take advantage of early payment discounts?
- Are credits issued promptly and accurately?

3. **VENDOR PROGRAM**

The vendor's programs consider all factors in how the supplier makes his products available to his W/D's.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Does the supplier meet NMDA's S.T.E.P. deadline for new product info which includes marketing assets and all information per NMDA template for pricing and program?

- Are their prices “annual” and effective January 1st?
- Are initial and repeat buy-ins to the supplier’s program realistic and achievable; allowing for acceptable inventory turns?
- Are price files received no later than November 1st?
- Is their freight program realistic in terms of purchasing levels? Are all your freight costs covered or is it an allowance to a certain percentage?
- Is the dating program realistic, if there is one at all?
- Do they support their products with adequate advertising in order to properly pull the product through to the consumer?
- Do they share their advertising and promotional calendar with wholesaler/distributors?
- Does their program properly provide advance notice of 90 days, of discontinued products? Do they have an annual merchandise exchange or return policy?
- Do they have a co-op advertising program that provides financial assistance for catalogues, flyers, etc.?
- Do they offer financial support for distributor shows?

4. **PROFITABILITY**

Is this supplier profitable to you?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is the supplier sensitive to distributor margins and profitability regarding supplier’s product line?
- Does the supplier offer buying/purchasing programs that enhance profitability?
- How does their GMROI compare to similar suppliers?
- How does the cost of handling, storing and shipping their products compare to similar suppliers?
- Are initial and repeat buy ins to the supplier’s programs realistic and achievable allowing for acceptable inventory turns?

5. **CHANNEL MANAGEMENT**

One goal of NMDA is to support and promote independent outlets. Wholesaler/Distributors do this by providing services to their customers that help them grow their individual businesses. Suppliers who recognize the “value added” services of the W/D and provide the tools that allow them and their customers to be competitive and profitable are more valued partners.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Does the supplier differentiate his product line through packaging, exclusive products, etc. when selling to non-W/D’s?
- Does the supplier, in conjunction with their sales representatives, successfully differentiate their pricing policies, allowing W/D’s a spread necessary to make their customers competitive? Are functional discounts given consideration?

- Is the market free of “over-distribution”?
- Does the supplier sell direct to consumers? Does supplier sell to online marketplaces?
- Does the supplier support Distributor Shows and special events?
- Do they support and enforce a written pricing policy?
- Are minimum pricing policies utilized if applicable to the market/product line?

6. **MARKETING ASSETS**

Marketing assets include, but are not limited to, product images, copy, logos and product specifications as well as other promotional materials like digital content and media posts

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Are new items or changes to existing items identified or explained in an electronic format?
- Does the supplier offer graphic layout and design services?
- Is the artwork and copy provided by the supplier satisfactory to you for use in your catalogs, websites and fliers?
- Is the artwork made available in a timely fashion (including all new items) to allow you to produce your catalogs and fliers efficiently?
- Is the supplier adhering to the digital graphics standard suggested by NMDA which can be found at www.nmdaonline.com under the “Standards” heading?
- Are the images easy to access and/or are they readily available electronically from the vendor’s website?
- Are the images easily identified by part numbers?

7. **CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

Customer support is the act of providing timely and empathetic help that keeps customers’ needs at the forefront.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is the customer support staff knowledgeable and do they have account specific information?
- Are their personnel easy to get hold of? Do you have accurate contact information from the vendor? Are they polite, responsive, and interested in helping you?
- Can they help you out of a jam and ship a rush order quickly?
- Do they process and ship special orders quickly and with no penalty?
- Does the vendor provide online help via email, chats, social media, etc.?
- Does the supplier send order acknowledgments when orders are placed?

8. **NUMBER SYSTEM – UPC**

Wholesale distributors use the suppliers' part numbers and UPC codes in their operations. Are these numbers easy to work with? Does the supplier supply standardized UPC information for their product line?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Does the supplier have a simple individual part number for each item it sells?
- Are part numbers kept to a manageable size or length?
- Is it simple to differentiate between colors, sizes, lengths, etc.?
- Are the part numbers properly marked, on multiple sides, on the products for easy identification?
- Does the vendor supply bar coded serial and batch numbers where appropriate?
- Does the supplier comply with all UPC standards?
- Does the supplier provide UPC numbers on the individual products where appropriate? Does the supplier provide the appropriate barcode and quantity code on the outside of the master pack?

9. PRODUCT AND WARRANTY

This category is designed to rate each supplier on the quality and innovation of their product offerings, as well as its handling of product warranty.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Does the supplier provide a Certificate of Insurance to you for product liability?
- Is the supplier's product considered to be of quality manufacture? Do you get what you pay for?
- Is their product offering innovative?
- Do you rarely receive product returned due to failure in the field?
- Is their warranty on product at the consumer level acceptable? Do they offer off-the-shelf replacement if necessary?
- Do they process warranty claims from you quickly and efficiently? Does the supplier take responsibility for returned freight?
- Does the vendor offer a way to start warranty claims online?
- Do they provide accurate and current SDS on all products where it is required on their website?

10. SALES REPRESENTATIVE

A manufacturer's sales representative, be it a factory person or an agency, is a critical link in the distribution chain. Does yours provide you the vital services you require?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is the rep knowledgeable of their company's marketing programs, policies, products, procedures, etc.?
- Do they participate, and are they engaged, in distributor shows in a professional manner?

- Are the sales representatives' actions consistent with the channel management philosophy of the supplier?
- Do they manage their sales territory in an unbiased manner?
- Are issues of concern communicated to you and the factory quickly and truthfully?
- Do they serve as a liaison between you and the factory, helping you solve problems and getting you information you require? For example, warranty, pricing, etc.?
- Do they perform product knowledge seminars for your sales staff to educate them on technical issues?
- Does the rep confirm pricing and product changes in a timely manner?
- Do they make regular calls on dealers on your behalf to educate them on their products and provide you feedback?
- Do they participate in the review and editing process of the distributor's product assortment as far as the lines they represent are concerned?

11. **PARTICIPATION – Executive Conference**

Those suppliers who participated in the Executive Conference and are final nominees, will automatically receive 5 bonus points to be assigned by the NMDA office on the ballots before the sheets are emailed. In the years where there is no Executive Conference this category is not used. (That will be the case for 2024 as there is not one planned.)

12. **PACKAGING – POINT OF PURCHASE**

Presentation is a critical part of the marketing of a product. Leading suppliers use packaging to give them a distinct advantage on the dealers' shelf.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is the packaging attractive and current?
- Does the vendor use sustainable packaging?
- Is the packaging used by the supplier durable enough and appropriate for the product? Are the weights of the products packaged supported by the packaging?
- Is the size of the packaging consistent and sized for efficient merchandising?
- Does the packaging give sufficient information, instructions and/or photo representations of the product?
- Where applicable, does the supplier make available P.O.P. displays to support product sales?
- Do all items properly display the UPC and manufacturer part numbers?

13. **PACKAGING – SHIPPING**

The quality of packaging used by suppliers to ensure the product arrives in perfect condition is critical.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Are the means of packaging the supplier's products sufficient to ensure safe arrivals of product? Are cartons strong enough; pallets sturdy enough; pallet loads shrink wrapped properly?
- Is the product packaged in such a way that allows arrival at its final destination in saleable condition?
- Were the products properly packed by the supplier? Was sufficient "packing" used? Were caps and lids securely tightened?
- Does the manufacturer partner with freight carriers that ensure intact and undamaged delivery?
- Are all shipments properly labeled, with easy to find packing slips helping the receiving department to process the shipment?
- Does the packing protect P.O.P. packaged product to ensure it can be used in merchandising as is intended?
- Are palletized shipments put on proper sized pallets to allow easy movement and easy storage in pallet racks?
- Does the vendor use sustainable packaging?
- When hazardous materials are involved does the supplier provide adequate information?
- Are hazardous materials labeled as hazardous materials and packaged correctly?

14. **PARTICIPATION – 2023 S.T.E.P. Purchasing**

Suppliers who participated in S.T.E.P. automatically receive 5 bonus points that will be assigned by the NMDA office on the score sheet before the ballots are emailed.

15. **ONLINE RESOURCES**

Are the tools provided by the manufacturer to streamline processes.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Does supplier offer a helpful website that serves 2-step distributors?
- How well does the supplier provide online resources to educate distributors and customers?
- Can buyers use online tools to check availability and order status?
- Does manufacturer supply technical information, sell sheets, ads, videos, part numbers, etc.?
- Does manufacturer provide images and copy?
- Are the appropriate categories secure sites as needed (for example order status, etc.)?

Special "Focus" Awards

NMDA will present three special "Focus" Awards in the Gold, Platinum and Diamond categories. These awards have been created to highlight areas that we, as two-step distributors, value in today's business climate.

When scoring suppliers, your scores, in certain categories, are also being used to determine the results of the following focus awards. Keep the following in mind when assigning your scores:

Marketing Award

Scores from category 6 (Marketing Assets) and category 12 (Packaging P.O.P.) will be combined to select this winner.

Supply Chain Efficiency Award

Scores from category 1 (Delivery); category 2 (Invoicing); category 8 (Number System – UPC), category 13 (Packaging – Shipping) and category 15 (Online Resources) will be combined to select this winner.

Distributor Channel Support

Scores from category 3 (Vendor Program), category 4 (Profitability), category 5 (Channel Management), category 7 (Customer Support) and category 10 (Sales Reps) will be combined to select this winner.