

EDI Distributors

by Allison Hester, Editor



Skip Markowitz of EDI Distributors in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, has witnessed numerous changes in the pressure washing industry over the past (almost) 40 years. But one thing that hasn't changed is EDI's support for the Power Washer's of North America (PWNA).

"I joined the PWNA, almost at inception, initially as an opportunity to generate additional sales," said Skip. "Since that time, we have found the annual conventions to be the best opportunity to see existing customers face-to-face, many whom we have never before met in person."

While Skip said he enjoys greeting existing customers with whom he has developed long-lasting friendships, "we enjoy the opportunity to work with some newer members to answer their questions about the industry," he explained. "Of course, these conventions also offer the best venue to show off new products as well as meet new prospects."

EDI was also honored to be selected as "PWNA Vendor of the Year" in 2009.

FROM SHIPS TO FLEETS ...AND BEYOND

After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania on a Navy ROTC scholarship and with a degree in Electrical Engineering, Skip spent almost five years engineering sea duty on destroyers. When it was time to "move on and try civilian life," he remained in the Navy Reserve, retiring as a Captain.

With a degree in Electrical Engineering, but little knowledge of the products developed over

the previous five years, he started a civilian career with several large companies in their manufacturing engineering divisions. When the opportunity presented, Skip joined a four man start-up company and was "charged with developing a line of reliable cold water pressure washers, electric and gas engine, to accurately dispense two-step chemical cleaners."

After the equipment and sales strategy was developed and successfully marketed in the Philadelphia metro area, the company decided to advertise to expand and market the products nationally, but without any local area distributors.

"I recall a particular sale of a complete package, equipment and chemicals, to a mail carrier in West Memphis, Arkansas. After a few great weeks of clean trucks, the equipment failed. So, I got on a plane to Memphis and was met by an irate customer with a pig in the back of his truck," he laughed. Skip fixed the equipment, but quickly learned the importance of a distributor network.

Over the next 25 years, the group became the industry's dominant manufacturer of two-step, cold water vehicle cleaning chemicals and equipment. Unfortunately, however, environmental and other considerations forced the closure of this business. "But it was a great ride!" he said. "It is interesting to note that some of our original equipment is still in operation today and that two-step or twin-chem vehicle washing is having resurgence, although it will likely never reach the level it was at in the 1980s."

With his company closed and no suppliers for their products, many distributors Skip had known over the years reached out to him for

parts support. "As I knew all of our suppliers, it was a natural for me to fill that void."

So Skip started EDI Distributors almost 20 years ago. EDI stocked and still stocks most parts for two-step equipment, which was manufactured and still in use since 1972.

MORE THAN TWO-STEP

Over the years, EDI has evolved and its support for the two-step industry has become less important. "Our business has since grown to become a supplier of high pressure pumps and product support for the power washing industry," Skip added. Changing technology has also impacted the way that EDI can sell products, which are now offered through its website as well as via telephone, local walk-in contractors, "and to the customer base we have built over the years."

Over the last three years, there has been a further business shift and now EDI exports high pressure pumps internationally to over 10 countries.

"From the very beginning, we have always



strived to present a professional image and now sell to several Fortune 500 companies. But we have never varied from our core value of providing prompt service, serious technical support, at competitive prices to all customers, regardless of size," Skip concluded. "When we get a call or request for a quote, we work with any prospect to source even the smallest o-ring or seal for a pump until they are satisfied. We are serious about customer service."

To learn more, visit their website at www.EDIdistributors.com.

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