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inside track

Publishing Corporation

Editorial & Subscription
Office

18 Lost Mine Place
Ridgefield, CT 06877

Phone (203) 431-4540

Fax (203) 431-4711

email: insidetck@aol.com

Dear A/V Specialist, dear Custom Integrator,

every year, it seems, more surveys crop up, all looking for dealers to complete them and promising that they are "*quick and easy*," "*take only 5 minutes of your time*."

The trademarked inside track Supplier Loyalty Test survey - now in its 27th year - is not one of them. You could say, this is "*the mother of all surveys*." For scores of dealers in our industry, though, it is simply "*The Survey*."

I like to think of it as an opportunity for dealers to take time out of their busy schedules once a year to evaluate the totality of their businesses - the product lines they have chosen to carry, whether those lines generate the profits dealers need to survive and thrive, and whether they can rely on supportive, pleasant relationships with their vendors, reps and other industry members (for example, their buying groups). The survey also prompts you to think about how the economic environment is affecting your business: what problems you have faced and what opportunities you have embraced during the year that is now drawing to a close. Some owners like to go through this exercise alone, undisturbed, in a quiet place. Others use it as an opportunity to bring the team together and discuss every aspect as they fill out the form.

Whichever is your preference - the main thing is that you take the time and DO it! Most of you will be familiar with this survey and know how to complete it. Just click on the **2012 survey** link and be on your way. For those new to the survey, detailed instructions are right on the form. The deadline for returning the survey form is **Friday, December 23, 2011**.

As always, all participating dealers will receive all of the survey results issues as they are published beginning in January 2012 as our thank you. Vendors may - and will - encourage and remind their dealers to participate in the survey. But there should be no pressure put on dealers beyond that. Vendors, dealers and **inside track** value the honesty and high integrity of this survey, and we are all united in the responsibility to uphold it.

I look forward to a strong participation, so that the results - when they are reported - give dealers, vendors and representatives a solid basis from which to make decisions for their future.

Sincerely,



Gisela Schoell, Editor