For instance Paslode®, a manufacturer of cordless and pneumatic nailers, staplers and trim tools, and nails and staples, relies on a comprehensive “systems sell” approach that extends through the entire product cycle.

The strategy involves four components that encompass tools, fasteners, on-site service provided by the distributor and work that entails gathering information from end-users on the jobsite. Each element of the “systems sell” approach supports and augments the others.

This article examines Paslode’s system sell to illustrate how such an approach ultimately results in premium tools and fasteners for contractors and builders.

**The Tool**

In 1997, Paslode introduced a tool that was developed in response to comments and suggestions from contractors and framers. By conducting intensive Trade Focus™ research and talking directly to end-users Paslode was able to design a tool for better performance and ease of use.
Dennis Eng, a carpenter contractor specializing in large single family custom homes in Crystal Lake, Ill., knows that having the right tool for the job can make or break the project.

There’s nothing more frustrating for contractors than having a tool break down in the middle of a project, leading to jobsite delays, cost over-runs and missed deadlines. Like any other contractor, Eng expects the tools he uses to be durable, reliable, cost effective, easy to use and, if necessary, easy to service.

For the last 14 years he’s relied on Paslode products, which he says he’s rarely, if ever, had problems with; however, should a minor repair be required, Eng says that usually the repair is relatively simple and something he can usually handle himself.

Although an integral element in the “systems sell” approach, tool development relative to end-user needs is only the first step in the process.

**The Distributor**

The distributor also plays a critical role in the “systems sell”
process, serving as a liaison between the manufacturer and the end-user. In San Antonio, as well as many other markets across the United States, distributors actually visit jobsites once a week to deliver nails and other supplies. At the same time, they provide the added benefit of tool service to Paslode users. These services allow the framer to stay at the jobsite, thus saving considerable time and increasing overall productivity. Paslode provides an incentive to distributors by serving as a source of referrals whenever contacted by an end-user about products or service. As a result, the distributor enjoys a stronger relationship with builders in addition to increased sales.

David Macelwett, a framing carpenter in San Antonio, Texas, specializing in large-scale tract housing projects, says that nine times out of 10 the guns require no maintenance at all, but the distributor gives the tool a thorough checkup anyway. By proactively servicing customers, the distributor helps the contractor save valuable time—and money—as well as prevent any problems that may arise with the tools. Although some competitive fastening systems may be less expensive by comparison, Macelwett says the level of service provided by the distributor more than compensates for the additional cost.
Paslode works diligently with distributors to ensure they have all the tools necessary to service contractors. Conversely, distributors provide Paslode with invaluable feedback from the field so that they can address any and all concerns expressed by end-users quickly and effectively.

The End-User

To gain a better understanding of end-user preferences, Paslode spends a great deal of time on the jobsite (in addition to gaining feedback from distributors) asking questions and learning more about tool features and performance, ergonomic attributes, tool format (whether strip or coil nailer), applications and pricing.

This trade focus approach plays an important role in documenting end-user needs and identifying specialty applications for both fasteners and tools.

Builder perceptions and experiences run the gamut, but tool manufacturers with a focused effort at the user level can identify problems, solutions and opportunities that might otherwise be overlooked. A recent example of this is Paslode’s development of a tool and fastener system designed specifically for the attachment of metal hardware.

Paslode came to understand that end-users desired a lighter weight and better balanced tool that reduced arm fatigue and increased productivity. By responding to those demands, Paslode was able to develop a tool that not only met but exceeded expectations. Gaining feedback from builders is the last but certainly a critical and crucial element in Paslode’s “systems sell.”

By focusing on the entire product cycle from tool and fastener design to distribution and service to end-user satisfaction, Paslode is able create more reliable, durable and cost efficient fastening systems.

About the Author

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