



FE&S' 2013 DEALER OF THE YEAR

Simple by Design

Each year companies from all industries spend endless amounts of time and money searching for the perfect business model and brand experience. While necessary in some cases, many businesses often fail to take the simple steps of listening to their customers and building a business model that uses a shared vocabulary to leverage the strengths of their employees. But that's exactly what *FE&S'* 2013 Dealer of the Year Singer Equipment Company has done.

By Joseph M. Carbonara, Editor in Chief

Photos by mk Photography



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Using a clearly defined culture and set of values that together serve as a roadmap for all employees to service customers — both internally and externally — Singer Equipment Company saw its annual revenue grow to \$223.6 million from \$134.3 million in 10 years. Despite its growth, the company's commitment to its three-pronged culture and the continued embrace of its small-town roots will remain integral parts of Singer Equipment Co.'s success for years to come.

CULTURE AND VALUES

"Having a consistent value system and culture that is explicitly stated and talked about has been extremely important in facilitating our growth," says Fred Singer, president and chief executive officer for Singer Equipment Co.

When he first started with the company, Singer took a step back and asked a basic question: What were the key attributes that people at Singer Equipment Co. needed to be

successful — both internally with each other and externally with their customers? From this emerged three key characteristics that have since become a part of each employee's work DNA: responsive, knowledgeable and friendly.

"They are in that order for a reason: 80 percent of what our customers loved or didn't like about Singer Equipment Co. had to do with responsiveness," Singer says. "The other 20 percent of what people liked about us was how much our people knew about products and the business. Friendly is just the icing on the cake. People like to work with people who are friendly. But people are not calling us for friendships. They are calling us for business. And if you are knowledgeable and responsive, they will want to do business with you."

Simple by design, this culture is something more than an elevator speech for employees to share with customers or suppliers. "It gave us a common vocabulary to evaluate whether we were meeting our own goals and standards," Singer adds. "And that applies to the internal part of the business, too. It does not

SINGER EQUIPMENT CO.: THE THIRD GENERATION

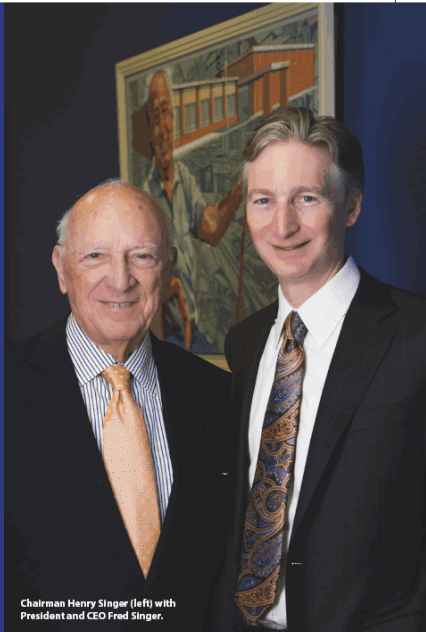
Singer Equipment Co. president Fred Singer is the third-generation family leader of the company, following his father, Henry, and grandfather, Frederick, who started the company in 1918.

Prior to joining the company, Fred spent three years working for Boston Consulting Group, a management consulting firm. In 1993, Fred joined Singer Equipment Co., then a \$22 million company with 2 offices. "When I first came back, I was not sure I was coming back permanently," he recalls. Fred's plan was to try working in the business for a year and stick around if he liked it or head to business school. Fred took to the company and gained experience in various aspects of the dealership before taking over as its president in 2000.

Although semiretired at 86 years old, Henry Singer remains active in the company and serves as the dealer's chairman. Henry regularly visits the office and loves to stay connected to the business, Fred says. "He's very inquisitive and helpful." In fact, during FE&S' visit to Elverson, Pa., Henry was busily working the phones and made two sales.

Henry remains an important resource to Fred, who continues to leverage his father's decades of experience in a variety of issues large and small. "My father was always fearless. He was bold," Fred says. "He was always trying to think about what the business was going to need to be successful in the coming years. He was not afraid to take chances. He taught me, if it is right for the business, you have to make it happen and not worry about what could go wrong."

Despite the fact that he consults regularly with Henry, Fred has found his own voice and leadership style. "Their styles are completely different, but their styles are timely," says John Vozzo, the dealer's COO and someone who worked with both. "Henry was always an entrepreneurial risk taker. Fred is more methodical and a planner. Henry did not care much about the plan. He just knew he wanted to get there. Fred knows where he wants to go and thinks a lot about the path the company will take to get there. Under both, though, we would always decide where we are going and do it as a team."



Chairman Henry Singer (left) with President and CEO Fred Singer.

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"It is important to make sure we can service what we sell. The majority of what we sell is serviced by our own fleet of trucks that come out of our distribution center."

—John Vozzo, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Singer Equipment Co.

petition at bay. The customers know that any problems will be taken care of," says Ray Buch, national accounts manager and a 30-year veteran of the company. "Everyone in the company, from the drivers up through Fred, reacts the same way. But people here don't realize they are doing it. It is just ingrained."

Equally important as the culture is the company's set of values: Always tell the truth, even if it is unpleasant or ugly. Stand behind what you sell; if it does not sound right or if the product is not doing what it is supposed to do, make good on it. Make decisions for the benefit of developing and maintaining a long-term relationship.

"That's what our managers want our people to do, and it gives all of our employees the ability to take care of their customers. It empowers them

matter who you are or your job — all we ask is that you are very responsive and you are as knowledgeable as you can be. When you look at our review forms, that's how we evaluate people."

And the dealer's employees openly embrace the culture. "It is more than something painted on the walls," says Joe Gallagher, the dealer's equipment manager. "We want people who are trained to do their jobs. They can help answer a customer's question or help by knowing where to go to get the necessary information. They can do it in a timely manner and be friendly when doing it."

In fact, some longtime employees feel Singer Equipment Co.'s corporate culture has emerged as one of its main competitive advantages. "I think our responsiveness keeps the com-

to do what's right for our customers," Singer adds. "There's no decision made for one order or one day."

Why was articulating the company's culture and values important to Singer Equipment Co.'s success? "In the end, you are trying to create a brand, which is a consistent delivered experience to the customer, no matter how they interact with you," Singer points out. "If you don't have this stuff explicitly stated, and that includes reiterating it day in and day out, you can't grow a consistent culture. And if you don't have a consistent culture, you don't have a brand. All of this so-called soft stuff is the foundation for our growth."

"The greatest pleasure I get is when I talk with customers and they say no matter who I interact with at Singer Equipment

I get the same great experiences," Singer continues. "When that happens, I know we are doing it right. Every company can have a great employee that covers up the ills of others, but you only get to the next level if customers have a great experience with every employee they interact with."

TEAM SELLING

Maximizing a sales force's potential and the use of labor is a challenge that most foodservice dealers face, and Singer Equipment Co. was no exception.

In fact, among many foodservice equipment and supplies dealers it is fairly common for salespeople to project manage their own work, developing their own designs and estimates. Some even have their own CAD operators. In these instances, though, the salesperson does not spend a lot of time actually selling. Rather they spend a lot of time managing projects. From Singer's perspective this limits the salesperson's earning potential, which is to their own detriment and the company's detriment, too.

As a way of addressing such challenges, some dealers have their sales reps hand over these various functions to other departments within the company. But this approach has its challenges, too. For example, details of a specific job can fall through the cracks when work is handed from department to department. Or when the company as a whole gets busier, then the employees working in those individual departments can become overwhelmed and face the difficult task of prioritizing which job comes first. "While the company may be doing better, the employees were doing worse," Singer recalls. "I was spending a lot of time just balancing the resources, and everyone was unhappy."

Singer observed that people who work in teams tend to outperform people that do everything themselves. This led the company to structure its sales force in a distinct way.

Today Singer Equipment Co. allocates to each team specific resources, such as administrative support and purchasing assistants as well as designers when applicable. And each team's compensation is based on their success. "They now have resources, and it is up to them to schedule their work, and it aligns the interests of the employees with their team and company," Singer says. "Typically in a process-oriented business, the errors happen in the handoff. So by bringing these people together in teams, you get into a groove, which helps increase quality and diminish error rates. That also keeps our salespeople and teams focused."

"Salespeople have a lot of capacity, so the question is can you put the support and infrastructure around them?" says L. Mark Woolcock, vice president of contract sales. "We will support that salesperson so they feel like they can sell up to their capacity. So we will push that salesperson to reach their capacity."

Each Singer Equipment Co. sales team concentrates on a particular customer type: chains, contract work, design build, street sales and so on. "We are a group of segmented distribu-

tion businesses that each focus on a key customer segment and try to provide solutions for that customer segment. The key elements at the center of those solutions are foodservice equipment and supplies," Singer says. "We look at each of these businesses on a profit-and-loss model to see how successful we are."

"We can chart our growth based on what's going on in the industry, where money is flowing, etc.," Woolcock says. "We know who our customers are and are very honest with ourselves about our strengths and weaknesses. We play to our strengths and don't spend a lot of time chasing those opportunities that are not right for us."

By design, each sales team is a little different in its approach, marketing materials and the way it builds solutions for its customers. Each team's commitment to being responsive, knowledgeable and, yes, friendly, is the tie that binds them. "Our cash-and-carry trade is empowered to have different products than we might have in the warehouse for our street customers. So if we have to bring in different product to serve that customer, we do it," Singer says.

The net result is a series of hyperfocused sales organizations well versed in their clients' unique needs. "I am a great believer that a sales team focused on a specific customer segment will be more deeply networked into the community, will have more knowledge of the customer's challenges and needs, will speak the language of that customer and in the end be more successful when selling against the generalist, which is what I hope my competitors are," Singer says. "For example, healthcare has a very specific language and set of concerns. If you don't know that language, you will have trouble selling into that segment."

SINGER EQUIPMENT COMPANY FACTS OF NOTE

- Founded: 1918
- Chairman: Henry Singer
- President and CEO: Fred Singer
- Number of Divisions: 2 (Singer Equipment Co. and Singer NY LLC)
- Number of Locations: 9
- Number of Employees: 358
- Number of Inside Salespeople: 35
- Number of Outside Salespeople: 48

One example of how this approach works well is the Philadelphia-based national accounts team led by Brian Morehead, vice president.

Morehead's national accounts team focuses on the emerging-chain market, which they define as those multi-unit operators with anywhere from 10 to 300 locations. "Those companies tend to be pretty lean and don't have procurement departments or other areas like that inside," Morehead says. "So they need a partner who can procure products for them better than they

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could. And they often don't have a construction department, so we step in to help make sure the contractors are doing what they said they would do and that the equipment can be installed properly. Those chains appreciate our ability to provide these services because it helps them grow quickly."

To support those clients, Morehead's team has purchasing professionals, account managers that handle day-to-day dealings with the customers, project managers and installers. "The whole team has to work together to make it successful. No one person makes it successful. It's the team with the best players that win," Morehead says.

Having such a team in place frees up Morehead to do what he does best: sell. "My responsibility is to drive business and drive it through the processes we established internally," he says. "And this model allows us to drive a high volume of business. When I first came to Singer the contract teams were working regionally. Since that point we have opened locations in 47 different states, and we have been able to expand the profile of Singer Equipment Co. nationally."

The foundation of the national accounts team's success? Service. "Considering that most dealers' buying structures are the same, what separates us is our service and attention to detail," Morehead says. "Our customers tell us that and that's why our national accounts have had growth of 30 percent to 40 percent in recent years. If we were not doing a good job, they would move on to another supplier."

"Factories, reps and our customers love the fact that Singer Equipment Co. is very steady and true. They can plan their business strategy based on how we run our company."

—L. Mark Woolcock, Vice President of Contract Sales

And this structure not only benefits Singer Equipment Co., it also adds value to all of the company's relationships and positions everyone involved for long-term growth. "We are absolutely not a transactional business. We are a relationship business, and that goes up the line to the factories and down the line to the customer," Woolcock says. "We are not looking for a quick-hitting transaction and then move on. We are much better at building relationships. When we go after a job and tell a factory that we want to take them in on a job with us, they believe it based on the end results they have seen over the years. And the customers have a lot of confidence that we are going to do the right thing in the end. Factories, reps and our customers love the fact that Singer Equipment Co. is very steady and true. They can plan their business strategy based on how we run our company."

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—Henry Singer, Chairman,
Singer Equipment Co.

salesperson that has the best chance to secure the order and delight the customer," Singer says. "And making that decision is the role of the manager. We tell our team to pick up the phone and talk to one another when conflicts arise. And 8 or 9 times out of 10, they figure it out themselves. There is no mystery as to how we are going to figure it out when they come to me or someone in management. In some cases we will have a team effort to help close the sale. As customers change, you need to change your sales process to respond to that reality. And in a lot of those times, team selling is the proper response."

As a result, Singer Equipment Co. is able to better leverage the skills of each employee. "People's weaknesses don't ever change. So we try to sup-

plement their weaknesses by building teams around them," Singer says. "We have to try to propel the great salespeople we have to a whole different level because you can't just go hire another great salesperson. It's just not that easy. So everything we can do to get a salesperson in a position where they can close more orders and support them with people around them creates more value. Yes, there are problems that come from this, but the benefits outweigh them."

The company used this focused, team-oriented approach as a springboard to growing its business. In addition to resonating with customers and factories alike, several longtime distributor sales reps also took notice when it was time for them to make a career change. For example, the decision by a broadband

And when things don't go exactly as planned? "We are going to use it to build a relationship. We are not going to use the opportunity to beat someone over the head to get a change order," Woolcock adds. "And that's what people want more than anything: someone that has got their back. That's definitely the way Fred has built the business while leading the company."

On occasion the different sales organizations will bump into one another in the field when pursuing new business. But so far as Singer is concerned, that's to be expected. And, as one might expect, the company has a simple, pragmatic approach to handling these situations.

"Any time you have a larger sales organization, you will have conflicts. Our basic philosophy is that we will put forward the

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Singer Equipment Co.'s customer service team is all smiles.

distributor and other regional equipment and supplies dealers to exit the contract space presented new growth opportunities for Singer Equipment Co. as some of these companies' people looked for new opportunities to continue their careers.

"We were able to pick up some good quality people with good reputations," says John Vozzo, a 29-year company veteran who serves as the dealer's executive vice president and chief operating officer. "They wanted to go to a quality location that understood the business, and that was us. Bringing on some very good salespeople is almost like acquiring a new company. So when you bring on a contract salesperson that's doing \$3 million to \$8 million, that's a good chunk. We went from a local dealer to a regional dealer to a national dealer, at least on the contract side."

The company has done a good job of converting its local origins into a key attribute of the value proposition that drives today's success. "We were lucky to be based in a small town because we were used to giving service and working shoulder-to-shoulder with our customers," says Henry Singer, the dealer's chairman. "When we got into the big markets, that small-town experience made a difference for us because it allowed us to bond with our customers. The thing that makes me most proud is the endless flow of comments about how we follow through on our commitment to service. I am proud of the fact that we have high standards for ourselves and our customers."

Indeed, although the company continues to grow, it will not compromise the way it services customers. "It is important

to make sure we can service what we sell," Vozzo says. The majority of what we sell is serviced by our own fleet of trucks that come out of our distribution center."

As the company has evolved, so too has its customer base. "Our mix of customers has changed. Some of it was done by attrition. We built our business on independents, and only the strong independents survive. But we seek out the growing chains, like every other dealer, because you can grow with them," Vozzo says. "We are so diverse and service such a broad base of customers that, when the economy struggled in recent years, one side of the business helped the other out and allowed us to keep growing. It's a good balance."

Another key step in Singer Equipment Co.'s evolution occurred in June 2011 when it acquired New Jersey-based M. Tucker Company. While this deal left many in the foodservice equipment and supplies industry slack-jawed, it gave Singer Equipment Co. an immediate presence in the greater New York market, which would have otherwise taken years to establish. In addition, acquiring M. Tucker allowed the company to provide continuous geographic service to customers from western Pennsylvania into New Jersey and New York. This also will help facilitate the company's eventual transition into the greater Washington, D.C., market.

Of course, acquiring and integrating a \$60 million dealer like M. Tucker into a \$126 million company, which Singer Equipment Co. was at the time, is no small feat. Still, under Singer's leadership the dealership embarked on a thoughtful and thorough process "to preserve the strengths of M. Tucker's organization while making sure it fits in with the



Singer Equipment Co.'s purchasing department, seen here, supports the individual sales teams.

culture, values and behaviors of the larger company."

"It is important to get to know the employees, the strengths of the individuals on their team and to get to know their customers," Singer adds. "During the first year, I was up at Tucker a lot establishing a reporting and communication rhythm with the whole company. What we focus on is making sure their behaviors are in keeping with the values of the company and they are keeping with the standards of the organization. I want everyone, whether they are at Tucker or Singer, to have that drive and passion."

And Singer's early efforts clearly have been rewarded. "He's much more familiar with who we are and more comfortable with us. He gets formatted information that helps him ask intelligent questions and make informed decisions," says Steven Tucker, president of Singer NY LLC/M. Tucker Co. "Fred certainly understands that each division is like a company in its own right. We have budgets that we work out together. He won't allow for a slam-dunk budget, but he won't allow for a budget we can't attain either. I work as hard or harder for Fred as I did for myself. So part of it is your accountability to yourself and understanding this is not a part-time business."

The transition for customers was a smooth one by most accounts. That's because most of M. Tucker's employees remained in place and continued using the same systems as before. "The marketplace never knew there was an issue with Tucker, so there was never an issue with restarting the brand as part of Singer," Tucker says.

Although roughly two years have passed since the deal was first announced, Singer remains very enthusiastic about the

opportunities it presents to Singer Equipment Co. "The growth opportunities we have in New York are essentially limitless," he says. "The market is so huge and fragmented that there is a lot of room to grow. We intend to invest in that market and remain committed to it. This is my 20-year project."

To facilitate this growth, though, clear, free-flowing communication between Singer Equipment Co. and its New York subsidiary will need to continue to evolve. To help facilitate this process, the company has added video-conferencing capabilities to allow people at the various offices to interact on a regular basis. "Growth companies have a rhythm of communication, and [sharing] their progress against goals is how they chart their success," Singer adds.

In addition, the company continues to explore other ways to further integrate its operations. For example, Singer Equipment Co. and its M. Tucker division are not yet on the same computer system; but making such a transition would allow the company to ship orders from either warehouse, thus making the organization even more responsive to customers. "That opens up tremendous opportunities to support each other," Singer says. "There are just so many ways to help each other to become more efficient and effective."

More than providing an entry into the New York market, adding M. Tucker to Singer Equipment Co. provided the Elverson, Pa.-based dealership with some additional insight experience at the senior management level, according to Singer. "Steven Tucker and Marc Fuchs are both highly

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intelligent and experienced. For our organization it is nice to have two more senior executives at the table to help discuss strategy. They have a lot of relationships with vendors and customers, and that adds a lot of value."

And the feeling of respect among Tucker, Fuchs and Singer is mutual. "It is very refreshing to be part of something so big and growing. Not only is Fred as smart as anyone in the business, but he also works harder than anyone else in the business. I am not sure anyone knows how hard he works," Tucker says. "I like being accountable to Fred; and when it comes to business, there needs to be accountability. He treats me respectfully and honorably. He always asks good questions and pushes us to do better. Fred does not like to lose and always asks good questions so we can learn from this."

FAMILY BUSINESS

Depending on ownership's philosophy and approach, working at a family-run business can be a blessing or a curse. For example, if the family leaders lack vision or feel the business is there to fuel their lifestyle, problems can quickly arise and trickle through the employee base. At Singer Equipment Co., though, the exact opposite is the case. "They keep building and investing in the company. This is something they have done for years and years because the company name matters. They want to see the business continue to grow," Buch says. "Fred has had a vision ever since he came

"We reinvest in the company and take a long-term approach to managing our business, which keeps us stable and able to grow. Over time that longer-term approach has become more important. In the boom years anyone can make it, but you have to be prepared for the lean times, too. By taking a long-term perspective, we can be flexible in meeting our customers' needs while still being able to meet all of our financial obligations."

—Jim Batty, Controller, Singer Equipment Co.

to work here, and that vision has come to fruition. That's good for all of us."

Being a successful and evolving family-owned business seems to be somewhat of a badge of honor for Singer. "Being a family-owned business in many ways defines who we are and is at the root of our culture. Being a business that's been around for 95 years gives you the ability to have a long-term perspective on relationships," Singer says. "Our behaviors and our values are based around things that we feel if we

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"I think our responsiveness keeps the competition at bay. The customers know that any problems will be taken care of."

—Ray Buch, National Accounts Manager, Singer Equipment Co.

form in the company's stated cultural attributes and values, Singer Equipment Co. continues its steady growth due to the entire company's unwavering commitment to its business model. "The fact that we are a dealer is what we do and not who we are," Woolcock says. "Fred runs this like a business, and you can take this model and sell any other product. The model and the foundation are very solid. Everything is run on a budget. No decisions are made hastily. We don't behave in that way. We look out for the customer's best interest. It is run like a true business and not a dealership. Fred stays the course—strong and steady. Not a lot of ups and downs. Everything is based on the numbers and the facts."

Indeed, while the company's culture is well defined and growth well documented, Singer Equipment Co. finds a way to maintain a warm and familiar atmosphere typically found only in really small businesses. No doubt, maintaining that small-company feel starts at the top, but it also has to be embraced by the employees, which

execute are the underpinnings of good relationships. We believe we are trying to create great relationships not only with customers but with suppliers and employees, too. These great relationships will not only drive the success of our business, they will also enrich the lives of the people who touch our business. So it goes beyond purely financial goals. And that is the luxury of a family-owned business."

Despite the company's growth in recent years, most longtime employees feel Singer Equipment Co. remains true to its roots. "It's pretty much the same company, just on a larger scale. The ethics are the same, and at its core the company is the same," Buch says.

In addition to sharing a common belief system that takes

is the case at Singer Equipment Co. "We may have grown in leaps and bounds in recent years, but in our heart we are a small company," says Paul Pasquarello, a 17-year company veteran who serves as customer service manager. "We made our bones working with the mom-and-pop restaurants, and we incorporate those beliefs in our day-to-day operations."

The bedrock of this warm and inviting atmosphere is open and free-flowing communication among everyone under the company's colorful corporate umbrella. "When I go into the lunchroom to eat my lunch, I am able to sit there and shoot the breeze with the president of the company, and that goes for all of our employees," Pasquarello says. "Senior-level management is very in tune with the employees. When

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To ensure everyone remains on the same page, Singer Equipment Co.'s management team, seen here, meets once a month.

we bring someone new on board, they take the time to get to know them."

Singer has monthly managers' meetings with department heads to make sure everyone is on the same page. And then there are quarterly employee meetings where everyone sees the numbers and gets an idea of the company's performance to date and the goals moving forward. "The lines of communication are very good," Pasquarello adds.

The communication is so good, in fact, that "no matter who you talk to, they can tell you where we are at and a lot more," Gallagher says. "Fred has a real open-door policy. He is approachable, and he will take time from what he is doing to listen."

Moreover, the communication with and interaction between management and the employees is ongoing. "Fred takes input from a lot of sources very well. He is a great listener and always has time for everyone," Buch adds. "When making decisions, he involves everyone that needs to be involved and does not go off doing his own thing."

The company's commitment to good communication remains constant in both good times and bad. For example, during the recent economic downturn the management team clearly laid out the company's status to the employees, telling them it would be necessary to accept a wage freeze and tighten the dealer's belt a little until business improved, or layoffs might be necessary. The employees agreed with

implementing the austerity measures but, more importantly, really respected management's candor during such a challenging time; this honesty earns it high marks from the employees. "Handling the employee base the way we did helped us remain a stable company, and that has benefitted both the customers and the suppliers," says Gerry O'Neil, a 13-year company veteran who serves as its warehouse manager.

And maintaining that high level of communication will be critical to the company's success moving forward. "As long as we stay focused and hire people that know their roles and what they need to do, we will stay successful," Woolcock says.

The combination of the company's evenhanded leadership and clear communication creates a certain stability that permeates the entire enterprise. "We don't have a lot of turnover, which has been a good thing for us," Vozzo says.

Despite its well-thought-out and well-executed plans, Singer Equipment Co. is not immune to some of the challenges other foodservice equipment and supplies companies must address. "While we have a well-tenured sales force, moving forward, the challenge for us — and for the industry — is finding out how to keep the pipeline filled with good people. It takes a lot of time and money to train people to fill those spots, as salespeople start to retire or move on," Vozzo says. "We are competing with other industries for salespeople, too. So your training and development become critical."

The Internet has been a disruptive force for traditional foodservice equipment and supplies dealers, too. For generations, the main role of foodservice equipment and supplies dealers like Singer Equipment Co. was to provide product information, pricing and availability to operators

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who needed products but had no idea where to get them or what they cost. "In those days, there was no way to get that information outside of calling a dealer," Singer says. "A good dealer was someone a customer could call to find out where to get something, what it would cost and how they could fit it into a system, whether that was a cookline or a tabletop. Today, the Internet has supplanted many of those roles. A customer can watch a video about a product and get a series of quotes, in some cases faster than if they called a dealer."

For dealers to stay relevant, they will need to find new ways to create value. "Otherwise, they will cease to exist because the market won't pay them just for having enough inventory to satisfy the local marketplace," Singer says. "So dealers, many dealers, are in the process of recreating the way they provide value in the marketplace."

This is where having a seasoned, well-trained sales force may help. "Ours is a well-established sales force, and they know how to sell the features and benefits of quality equipment and communicate the ROI to help our customers buy something because of the value it offers and not the stickerprice," Gallagher says. "We offer something they can't get from an Internet company. Hopefully, our people are asking the right questions to find out what the customer's needs really are."

Not content to rest on its recent success, Singer Equipment Co.'s management team is already exploring what comes next for the 95-year-old company. For example, in terms of the company's size, the geographic market it serves

In addition to being seen throughout Singer Equipment Co.'s offices in various formats, the three elements of the dealer's culture — responsive, knowledgeable and friendly — are warmly embraced by the employees.

and its evolving chain presence, Singer says the company is getting close to achieving its goals. So collectively, management is looking at what lies ahead. In doing so, they are trying to understand how big the company should grow to be, both in terms of revenues and geography served. In addition, the management team is trying to develop an idea of what their customers will look like in the years to come and what services they will want Singer Equipment Co. to provide. Also part of this discussion is trying to understand what the foodservice equipment and supplies dealer and manufacturer communities will look like in the coming years.

"We still believe that the greater New York market is important for us to eventually be able to expand into the Washington, D.C., market. So it is important for us to build out our footprint in those areas," Singer says. "We want to be the dealer of choice in that marketplace, but we still have a long way to go. So that's a much longer-term goal for us." **FE&S**