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## **NAW Institute and IBM Partner to Create Next**

### ***Facing the Forces of Change*<sup>®</sup> Report**

*IBM's Institute for Business Value to Research*

*Wholesale Distribution Future Trends*

Washington, DC (March 3, 2010) – The NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence and IBM's Institute for Business Value (IBV) have announced that the two organizations will collaborate to produce the next *Facing the Forces of Change*<sup>®</sup> report.

*Facing the Forces of Change*<sup>®</sup> is the landmark wholesale distribution industry future trends research report that has been updated and published every three years since 1982. The latest version will be available in November of this year.

According to NAW President Dirk Van Dongen, "IBM's Institute for Business Value will bring great intellectual depth to this ongoing research, and we're delighted to be partnering with

them. Wholesaler-distributors will gain key strategic insights about the direction distribution is headed in the next five years from this new collaboration between our organizations.”

Bill Gilmour, IBM Industry General Manager, Wholesale Distribution and Consumer Products, adds, “Wholesaler-distributors continue to own a critical place in the supply chain of products ranging from fasteners to fresh produce. IBM is excited about extending its relationship with NAW to include the next iteration of *Facing the Forces of Change*®. We very much look forward to working closely with NAW and its membership to develop a sound point of view on the future of the wholesale distribution industry, especially at this pivotal time.”

Through the years, distribution executives and their management teams have used *Facing the Forces of Change*® to facilitate both short- and long-term strategic planning at their companies. Given the extreme uncertainty that characterizes the current economic environment, this may be the most important of the nine versions of *Facing the Forces of Change*® published to date.

“The Institute for Business Value has conducted dozens of trends research reports,” states IBV’s Guy Blissett. “Many of them have encompassed wholesale distribution as a subcomponent, so we have a good deal of experience with distributors and distribution. We’re excited to shine the *Facing the Forces of Change*® spotlight fully on distribution with the NAW Institute as our partner.”

According to the NAW Institute and IBV, a cross-section of wholesale distribution industry executives representing a variety of lines of trade are expected to participate in the *Facing the Forces of Change*® background research, including dozens of in-depth interviews with distributor company personnel. All wholesaler-distributors across the industry are encouraged to participate in the *Facing the Forces of Change*® online survey. To take the survey, go to <http://www.ibm.com/services/bcs/benchmarking/survey/ms/> and enter the authorization code: **NAW2010**.

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### **About NAW and the NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence**

The National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW) was created in 1946 to deal with issues of interest to the entire merchant wholesale distribution industry, thereby freeing affiliated associations to concentrate on the concerns specific to their lines of trade. NAW is a federation of more than 100 wholesale distribution associations and thousands of individual firms that collectively total more than 40,000 companies.

The role of the NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence is to sponsor and disseminate research into strategic management issues affecting the wholesale distribution industry. The NAW Institute aims to help merchant wholesaler-distributors remain the most effective and efficient channel in distribution.

### **About IBM Institute for Business Value**

The IBM Institute for Business Value is comprised of more than 50 consultants who conduct research and analysis across multiple industries and functional disciplines. IBV develops fact-based strategic insights for senior executives around critical public and private sector issues. IBV has a worldwide presence, drawing on consultants in 11 countries to identify issues of global interest and to develop practical recommendations with local relevance.