

Introducing *FER* Top Dealers

New *FER* research helps operators and consultants analyze the scope and capabilities of leading E&S dealers.

By Robin Ashton

Look around you. From the largest multiunit operations to the individual unit level, nearly every operator in foodservice needs and uses the services of equipment and supplies dealers and distributors. But how do you assess the scale and offerings of individual distributors to

determine whose capabilities match your particular needs?

To help you sort out the players, *Food-service Equipment Reports* undertook a major new research project into the leading E&S dealers serving the U.S. market. We call it our Top Dealer Report.

No easy project, to be sure. With a readership of such huge purchasing power, the temptation for dealers to “fudge” numbers might be an issue, we knew. Further complicating the process: Most dealers in the U.S. market, and even quite a few of the giant headline distributors, are privately

FER Top 2011 Dealers

Rank	Company	Headquarters City	2010	2009
1	Edward Don & Co.	Chicago	\$552,000,000	\$553,000,000
2	TriMark USA	South Attleboro, Mass.	\$513,000,000	\$507,000,000
3	Wasserstrom Co.	Columbus, Ohio	\$457,000,000	\$429,000,000
4	The Boelter Companies	Waukesha, Wis.	\$164,812,061	\$191,989,496
5	Bargreen Ellingson	Tacoma, Wash.	\$144,248,382	\$149,000,000
6	Hubert Co.	Harrison, Ohio	\$144,000,000	\$132,000,000
7	Singer Equipment	Elverson, Pa.	\$125,640,927	\$125,219,867
8	Clark Food Service Equipment	Lancaster, Pa.	\$103,300,000	\$81,300,000
9	Stafford Smith	Kalamazoo, Mich.	\$101,000,000	\$90,000,000
10	Mission Restaurant Supply	San Antonio	\$88,900,000	\$79,430,000
11	Hockenbergs Equipment & Supply	Omaha, Neb.	\$81,761,617	\$68,884,940
12	R.W. Smith & Co.	San Diego	\$75,081,946	\$88,875,610
13	Ace Mart Restaurant Supply	San Antonio	\$74,827,400	\$76,903,600
14	Atlanta Fixture & Sales	Atlanta	\$48,358,838	\$51,114,656
15	Hotel & Restaurant Supply	Meridian, Miss.	\$46,479,933	\$46,758,129
16	Action Sales	Monterey Park, Calif.	\$42,734,933	\$40,024,677
17	Beltram Foodservice Group	Tampa, Fla.	\$39,800,000	\$43,200,000
18	Johnson-Lancaster & Associates	Safety Harbor, Fla.	\$35,000,000	\$35,000,000
19	Paramount Restaurant Supply	Providence, R.I.	\$33,200,000	\$35,100,000
20	State Restaurant Equipment	Las Vegas	\$26,813,009	\$28,417,304
21	Birmingham Restaurant Supply	Birmingham, Ala.	\$24,396,471	\$27,287,751
22	Oswalt Restaurant Supply	Oklahoma City	\$20,800,000	\$19,800,000
23	Curtis Restaurant Equipment	Eugene, Ore.	\$19,962,000	\$20,677,000
24	Buffalo Hotel Supply	Amherst, N.Y.	\$19,091,126	\$26,798,464
25	Alack Refrigeration	Hammond, Mo.	\$17,325,000	\$15,650,000
26	Sub-Technologies	Lees Summit, Mo.	\$15,223,073	\$15,975,885
27	Gerharz Equipment	East Syracuse, N.Y.	\$14,700,000	\$9,200,000
28	Manning Brothers Food Service Equipment	Athens, Ga.	\$14,050,000	\$16,000,000
29	Burkett Restaurant Equipment & Supplies	Toledo, Ohio	\$12,300,000	\$8,880,000
30	Food Service Renovations/DBA Big A Distributors	Morrison, Ga.	\$11,090,483	\$13,042,648
31	Crest Foodservice Equipment	Virginia Beach, Va.	\$9,773,242	\$9,731,465

All 31 dealers in this ranking provided independent verification of their revenues. Year-to-year changes should not be considered a measure of performance, as a wide variety of factors can affect dealer volume in any given year. Also, the effect of acquisitions has not been taken into account.



Edward Don & Co.

held. Most, if not all, hesitate to share their volumes, fudged or otherwise. Many simply refuse, as these listings make clear.

And anyway, we already have a comprehensive, fully linked, electronic database of dealers and distributors as part of our “Services Guide” at *fermag.com*. Why complicate things?

The persistence of the requests from operators and dealers finally overcame our reluctance. The main thing was to be sure the numbers were real.

Third-Party Verification, Carrots And Sticks

With the help and advice of several leading dealers, we decided we needed a verification process. Dealers would have to provide a letter or signature from a certified public accountant or other independent accountant verifying the information. CPAs ethically cannot sign off on something that’s not true. We later learned this same verification methodology is used by magazines such as *Inc.* for their own rankings and listings.



Wasserstrom Co.

Still, the main question remained. Why would a dealer give us numbers, let alone verify them? What kinds of carrots could we offer? And would we need some non-lethal sticks?

The carrots seemed obvious. Those verifying would be identified as such, providing them with a means of independent verification of their size and scope. And this verification would be within the context of *FER*, a neutral, credible third-party information source for multiunit operators, consultants and others in the market. Another carrot: Dealers that verified their data would also get a detailed listing of services offered—more exposure in front of the largest buyers and specifiers of E&S in the world.

The stick, or maybe the absence of carrot, would be that dealers that didn’t report wouldn’t get listed. If a really big dealership (defined as an estimated \$20 million or more) didn’t report, we’d estimate volume to account for the presence of a big dealership in an alphabetical listing, but the dealership would not be ranked. And dealers that reported but did not verify did not get their services listed.

With these variables, our rankings and listings are not intended to be comprehensive, though we are reasonably certain we have listed in some



Edward Don & Co.

way the vast majority of dealers capable of serving a multiunit operator.

Measures Of Scale, Scope—Not Performance

So, 31 brave dealers provided us with verified numbers from Edward Don & Co. at more than \$550 million to Crest Foodservice Equipment at just under \$10 million. These 31 dealers are ranked on the opposite page in our first listing.

The numbers include the following, as the definitions were set on the survey form: “Include revenues from all product sales, including equipment, durable supplies, tabletop, paper and other disposables, janitorial/sanitation chemicals and products, service and design fees, and fabrication purchased or produced for distribution resale.”

We also asked for sales from both 2010 and ’09. But this is important: You can’t consider the changes year-to-year as a measure of performance. Anyone who has been in this business very long knows that a host of factors affect dealer volume in any given year. Departments can be added or shuttered. Services can come and go. One big customer can have a great year or a not so great one.

Chain-oriented dealers can have a major rollout one year and not the next, or suddenly have a customer go into high unit-growth mode, then shut it down just as quickly. Bid-oriented dealers can have a big sport stadium or convention center job

one year and see their volume swing by \$15 million or more from year to year. The health of the local market is also a factor. Many dealers in areas hard-hit by the housing bust, such as California, Arizona, Nevada and Florida, have seen their vol-

umes plummet in the past couple years.

Companies Not Included

Not all companies that provide distribution services to multiunit operators are included in these listings. We don't include

companies with more than 50% of their volume from paper, disposables or jan/san chemicals, other than the few large broad-line distributors we list. We apologize to those companies with such product mixes that responded to our survey.

**Services Offered By
FER Top 2011 Dealers**

Company	Number of Employees	Branches	Total Facilities Area	Kitchen Design	Interior Design	Credit	Showroom	Cash & Carry	Test/Training Kitchen	Internet Ordering
Ace Mart Restaurant Supply	282	14	400,000	•		•	•	•	•	•
Action Sales	85	2	120,000				•	•		
Alack Refrigeration	58	3	100,000	•		•	•	•	•	•
Atlanta Fixture & Sales	126	1	175,000	•		•	•	•		•
Bargreen Ellingson	410	20	540,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Beltram Foodservice Group	150	9	205,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Birmingham Restaurant Supply	51	1	93,435	•	•	•	•	•		•
The Boelter Companies	300	9	315,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Buffalo Hotel Supply	62	2	100,000	•	•	•	•	•		
Burkett Restaurant Equipment & Supplies	45	1	170,000	•		•	•	•		•
Clark Food Service Equipment	350	6	580,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Crest Foodservice Equipment	30	2	44,000	•		•	•	•		•
Curtis Restaurant Equipment	48	4	48,000	•		•	•	•	•	
Edward Don & Co.	973	6	995,000	•		•				•
Food Service Renovations/ DBA Big A Distributors	26	1	57,000	•	•		•		•	
Gerharz Equipment	20	1	30,000	•		•	•	•		
Hockenbergs Equipment & Supply	160	7	220,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hotel & Restaurant Supply	122	5	215,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Hubert Co.	326	5	700,000							•
Johnson-Lancaster & Associates	36	6	40,000							•
Manning Brothers Food Service Equipment	28	1	30,000	•		•	•	•		•
Mission Restaurant Supply	216	4	282,000			•	•	•		•
Oswalt Restaurant Supply	43	3	30,000	•		•	•	•		•
Paramount Restaurant Supply	58	2	97,000	•		•	•			•
R.W. Smith & Co.	175	4	96,750	•	•	•	•	•		•
Singer Equipment	250	5	262,400	•		•	•	•	•	•
Stafford Smith	123	13	100,000	•		•				
State Restaurant Equipment	45	1	60,000			•	•			
Sub-Technologies Inc.	24	1	42,000					•		•
TriMark USA	900	13	1,000,000	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Wasserstrom Co.	1,300	25	1,800,000	•		•	•	•		•

supplies for chain customers worldwide. But after a long conversation with Greg Richards, v.p.-business development for Franke Foodservice, we decided the company is primarily a manufacturer, not a dealer. It designs and fabricates OEM

equipment for its clients. It actually designs and has manufactured smallwares and other supply items. And while it has a varied client base, it also has one very large customer. It is no accident that Tom Campion, president of Franke Foodservice Sys-

tems, is an officer of the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers, not the Foodservice Equipment Distributors Association. A number of other companies are not included here for similar reasons.

Other Leading Dealers, Volumes Estimated Or Reported But Not Verified

Company	Headquarters City	2010	2009
Adams Burch*	Landover, Md.	\$28,000,000	
All Things Restaurant**	Huron, Ohio	\$1,200,000	\$900,000
Alto-Hartley Inc.**	McLean, Va.	\$12,386,537	\$12,969,442
Arizona Restaurant Supply**	Tucson, Ariz.	\$20,000,000	\$28,000,000
Aydelott Equipment*	Centerville, Ohio	\$25,000,000	
B&J-Peerless Food Service Equipment*	Kansas City, Kan.	\$19,000,000	
Best Restaurant Equipment & Design*	Columbus, Ohio	\$29,500,000	
Boston Showcase*	Newton Highlands, Mass.	\$20,000,000	
Buckelew Hardware**	Shreveport, La.	\$10,025,007	\$12,600,705
C&T Design and Equipment*	Indianapolis	\$75,000,000	
Calico Industries*	Annapolis Junction, Md.	\$32,000,000	
Carney & Sloan**	Wheeling, W.Va.	\$1,400,000	\$1,600,000
Concept Services*	Austin, Texas	\$69,000,000	
Custom Diamond Int'l. Kitchen Equipment** I	Laval, Que., Canada	\$6,600,000	\$6,300,000
Duray/Baring/J.F. Duncan Industries**	Downey, Calif.	\$100,000,000	
East Bay Restaurant Supply*	Oakland, Calif.	\$65,000,000	
Ford Hotel Supply*	St. Louis	\$30,000,000	
General Hotel and Restaurant Supply*	Miami	\$60,000,000	
Great Lakes Hotel Supply**	Detroit	\$42,000,000	\$39,000,000
Instawares Holding Co.*	Kennesaw, Ga.	\$55,000,000	
Kamran & Co.*	Santa Barbara, Calif.	\$29,000,000	
Kirby Restaurant Supply*	Longview, Texas	\$38,000,000	
Kittredge Equipment**	Agawam, Mass.	\$25,000,000	\$25,200,000
M. Tucker**	Patterson, N.J.	\$59,000,000	\$58,000,000
Mobile Fixture & Equipment**	Mobile, Ala.	\$26,500,000	\$25
National Restaurant Supply*	El Paso, Texas	\$31,000,000	
Premium Supply**	Deer Park, N.Y.	\$21,000,000	\$22
Primesource Foodservice Equipment**	Dallas	\$73,000,000	\$80,000,000
QualServ Corp.**	Ft. Smith, Ark.	\$76,000,000	\$80,000,000
Sam Tell Companies*	Farmingdale, N.Y.	\$35,000,000	
Smith & Greene*	Kent, Wash.	\$38,000,000	
Strategic Equipment & Supply*	Irving, Texas	\$192,000,000	
The Restaurant Source*	Denver	\$20,000,000	
Trendco*	Batavia, Ohio	\$28,000,000	
Tundra Specialties*	Boulder, Colo.	\$32,100,000	
United Restaurant Equipment Company**	Raleigh, N.C.	\$14,500,000	\$15,250,000
H. Weiss Co.*	Armonk, N.Y.	\$24,000,000	

*Volume estimated by FER. **Volumes reported by dealer but not verified. I Volume in Canadian dollars.

The following alphabetical listing includes dealers that reported volumes but did not provide independent verification, and it also includes dealers that we believe have annual volumes of \$20 million or more that did not report.

We urged dealers choosing not to verify to report volumes anyway. For those that elected not to report any number at all, we used several different sources to estimate volumes. If we had a bias, and we tried not to have one, we've erred on the low, conservative side in making

the estimates.

Dealers whose volumes we estimated are marked with a single asterisk*. We only estimated last year's volume for estimated dealers. Dealers that reported but did not verify are indicated by a double asterisk**. In most cases, they provided numbers for both 2010 and '09. Bear in mind that these dealers had a host of legitimate reasons for choosing not to verify or report. The most common reason given: "It's nobody's business but ours."

Leading Broadline Distributors Of E&S

Company	City	2010	2009
Sysco Corp. (v.)	Houston	\$2.8B/\$700,000,000	\$2.7B/\$675,000,000
U.S. Foodservice/Next Day Gourmet*	Rosemont, Ill.	\$1.3B/\$290,000,000	
Jetro Holdings/Restaurant Depot*	College Point, N.Y.	\$1.2B/\$300,000,000	
Performance Food Group*	Richmond, Va.	\$700,000,000/\$120,000,000	
Gordon Foodservice*	Grand Rapids, Mich.	\$495,000,000/\$135,000,000	
Reinhart Food Service (v.)	La Crosse, Wis.	\$364,000,000/\$43,700,000	\$329,000,000/\$39,500,000

(v.)Volume independently verified. *Volume estimated by FER.

A Work In Progress

This Top Dealer Report project is a work in progress. This year, 31 dealers verified, a substantial and successful start, and we hope more dealers will do so next year. Many that did not verify this year told us they will participate next year.

And of course the main thing: We hope our operator and consultant readers find this a helpful, reliable guide to potential dealer partners.

Scott Hume assisted with research for this project.

Broadline distributors, that is, distributors that primarily distribute food, are often significant distributors of equipment, supplies, and tabletop products, as well as paper, disposables and janitorial/sanitation chemicals. They are thus an alternate source of E&S products for many operators, including chains. We list and rank the top five broadline houses, plus cash & carry specialist Jetro/Restaurant Depot. Sysco and Reinhart verified their volumes. We list two numbers per year for all. The first number is their total non-foods volume, including paper, disposables and janitorials. This number is comparable to that of E&S dealers that also distribute such products and many do. The second number is their volume of equipment, durable supplies and tabletop. Most broadliners' product mixes are skewed heavily toward tabletop and smallwares in these numbers.

Custom Bulk Reprints

Now that you have been featured in *Foodservice Equipment Reports*, why not leverage this opportunity to promote your product or service with custom reprints?



Custom professional reprints (100 or more) and electronic PDF reprints are available by contacting our reprint department. All hard copy reprints are printed on gloss-coated paper stock in full color or black & white. Electronic PDF reprints are licensed for web posting for 1 year and may be renewed annually.

Call our reprint department at (800) 259-0470 for complete details.