

The Kirschner Group makes a world of difference

Jane Caris, vice president of sales and marketing for **The Kirschner Group (TKG)**, checks in with *Beauty Industry Report (BIR)* with an update on the professional beauty industry's largest and fastest-growing independently-owned sales force.

BIR: What is the focus of TKG for 2011?

Jane Caris (JC): Exactly that...focus! As a professional sales team, we are focused on understanding and servicing the needs of our customers. TKG is the largest sales organization in the professional beauty industry. Our 40 sales professionals are based in their respective markets and are territory experts. We are also the only sales company in the professional beauty industry to offer our services worldwide. That allows us to become a strategic partner with our manufacturers and to service them in a broader capacity.

BIR: How has the change in the professional beauty industry affected TKG?

JC: Three factors have affected TKG: the consolidation and nationalization of distribution, the rise in importance of distributor stores and the globalization of business. First, in response to distribution consolidation, TKG has formed sales teams to service national distributors. That ensures that we are communicating the same information, plus coordinating and supporting the same initiatives throughout a distributor's entire network. Our regional managers, **Kevin Osterloh** and **Charlie Richard**, have been instrumental in orchestrating our team approach. Second, with the growth of distributor stores, TKG has developed a store program and has hired several dedicated store support personnel. We are partnering to provide education, training and merchandising support at a distributor store level, and we've seen a dramatic affect on store sales and brand share. **Kimberly Breed**, our director, oversees our store program. Lastly, TKG recognized more than five years ago how important the international market was becoming. We have been a pioneer in representation of U.S. professional beauty brands internationally and are an excellent choice for those who want to expand their sales to the international market.

BIR: What sort of growth are you experiencing in your International division?

JC: Our international division's sales more than doubled in 2009, and we anticipate that the same will be true this year. We will have a strong presence at all three 2010 **Cosmoprof** shows—Europe, North America and Asia. Plus, our international team continues to grow with an expert group of seven team members covering Europe, Central and South America, Asia and the Pacific Rim. We've developed strong alliances with key distributors, and we've helped our manufacturing partners quickly and confidently grow in this expanding market.

Lance Posen is our vice president overseeing the international division, with his two managing directors, **Paolo Rezzara** and **Rob Robertson**. The Kirschner Group International is in its fifth year of bringing premier brands, such as **Sexy Hair**, **Alterna**, **Keratin Complex**, **Brocato** and **Pravana**, to the international market.

BIR: What other initiatives are on your plate?

JC: We've started to market key promotions to our distribution customers on a bi-monthly basis using the Internet. This idea was developed by our customer service team as a way to offer "exclusive" deals, available for a limited period of time and with unlimited reach, to our customer base. Our email blasts have met with early success, boasting an open rate in the 40% range and a response rate of more than 4%. **Laurie Morgan** oversees our customer service team, which balances three sets of customers—our manufacturers, our distributors and our sales team. The e-blast initiative is a win for all three groups!

BIR: With your team located throughout the world, how often do you get together?

JC: At least three times per year. We recently hosted our annual strategic planning meeting during which we accomplish three goals. Our first goal is team bonding. Working together as a unified team and offering our customers cohesive, consistent national service is a core competency of ours. Secondly, we use the time to share and learn. Our theme this year was "World Class Performance." Lastly, we reviewed our goals for 2010 and committed to new goals. I view our sales team as my most

important customer. If I focus on getting them what they need to be successful, all of our customers benefit!

BIR: What makes TKG unique ?

JC: We have a strong group that works well, both independently and as a unified team. We offer our manufacturing partners unlimited reach, with a cohesive sales plan and approach. As **Harlan Kirschner**, TKG founder and president says, "The world is our territory." We work hard to keep our entire team informed, connected and equipped with the right tools and information. As our mission states, we are committed to being the best at our game and making a world of difference.

"The world is our territory."

BIR: Jane, you have been at TKG for a year. How have you made a difference?

JC: I've spent my career as a merchant—the first 15 years with **Target** corporation and the last 10 years with **Regis Corporation**, as vice president of merchandising. It is my instinct to find an opportunity and maximize it! Whether it is a product, a process or a person, I enjoy understanding it fully and then taking it to the next level. My corporate experience has taught me the importance of a solid structure, so I've spent much of my first year strengthening our internal planning, processes and reporting. Second, most of my career has involved managing people. I am passionate about focusing on my team's success, my manufacturing partners and our distribution customers. Couple that with a natural inclination to find opportunities and solutions, and I've found a perfect fit at TKG.



Reach Jane Caris at
800-328-4353 or
Jane@kirschnergroupp.com.
Visit
www.kirschnergroupp.com.