

Industrial Supply

THE VOICE OF DISTRIBUTION



THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

**Selling is evolving.
Are you?**

**Making the sales
effort digital-ready**

**Driving new
revenue**

Sandy Johns, Cathy Pendrick and Marisol Fernandez, leaders of ISA's W.I.S.E. group

INSIDE

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

ISA's W.I.S.E. Networking group provides personal and professional development for executive-level women from ISA member firms

BY GAIL LUDEWIG

When Cathy Pendrick, the current chair of the Industrial Supply Association's W.I.S.E. Networking Group, was first contacted about becoming a founding W.I.S.E. member, she was concerned about meeting the "executive level" criteria because of her position at the time. The titles of the other leadership recruits were impressive.

"I was thinking, how do I make what I do sound important enough to be considered 'executive level'?" recalls Pendrick, now customer service director for Quality Mill Supply, Franklin, Indiana. Her fears were allayed when the opening question on the first phone call for the new organization was, "What do you do for fun?" She learned later the reason she was asked to join the leadership team was not based on her title, but her abilities and influence in the industry. A key focus of the Women Industrial Supply Executives group is to help women in the channel connect with one another to address personal and professional growth and training.

W.I.S.E. began in 2011 as Kathleen Durbin, CEO of General Industrial Tool & Supply in Burbank, California, was winding down her tenure as ISA board chair. She had one piece of unattended business. It was a simple concept to address a gap in the industry: a vision to bring women professionals with common interests in advancing their careers and advocating for women's influence within the industry. She hoped to create an environment where women could learn from each other and strengthen their business relationships to be more successful. Professional education and leadership development would quickly follow. And it did, with the first annual W.I.S.E. Summit held in Tampa Bay, Florida, in 2012.

"It's been blue sky since," Durbin says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



PHOTOS: RICK BELLA

Sandy Johns, national account manager for Milwaukee Tool and immediate past chair of ISA's W.I.S.E. Networking Group; Cathy Pendrick, customer service director, Quality Mill Supply and current chair of W.I.S.E.; and Marisol Fernandez, vice president for Bunzl's U.S. Safety Business and chair-elect for W.I.S.E.



Cathy Pendrick, customer service director, Quality Mill Supply and current chair of W.I.S.E. Networking Group learned the reason she was asked to join the leadership team was not based on her title, but her abilities and influence in the industry.

"Kathleen's vision is so spot on as there are many of us that grew up as leaders and didn't have the same opportunity to network with peers and leaders that have been or were going through the same challenges," recalls Lisa Mitchell, Vallen CEO. "The Summit is a great forum for women in the industry to share successes, develop their skills as well as mentor each other. Developing our leaders and creating the leadership blueprint for the future is exciting for the women in and joining the industry."

A cornerstone of W.I.S.E. continues to be the annual Summit. Its strong education component for both personal and professional leadership development is complemented by multiple networking opportunities and a chance to work together on a community service project. The leadership of W.I.S.E. works tirelessly to ensure that the group delivers on its promises. Feedback from members and sponsoring companies consistently shows that it does.

Sandy Johns, national account manager for Milwaukee Tool and immediate past chair of W.I.S.E., raves about the Summit's value. "The investment is similar to the amount you would pay for any other two-day professional training programs."

"But the W.I.S.E. group connects you with industry partners who will drive your business forward. There is significant benefit to building your network with people who have many of the same challenges and opportunities as you and who are invested in growing sales of your products," Johns says.

Heather Eisenhauer, customer service manager for PFERD Inc. in Milwaukee, shared her feelings after attending her first Summit last year.

"As I tied my shoelaces and set forth to run the cobblestone streets of Charleston, South Carolina, that first Monday morning of the 2016 W.I.S.E Summit, my mind flooded with feelings of excitement, anticipation and a little nervousness. With each step I took, I wondered, as a brand-new member and first-time attendee, whether or not the group would be a good fit, the topics relevant

and the networking beneficial. As I finished my run and took in the refreshing harbor air, I quickly recognized that Charleston was more than a place. It is an experience that is meant to leave a lasting impression on anyone who is lucky enough to have encountered it. By the end of the 2016 W.I.S.E. Summit, it struck me that I had that exact same feeling."

BENEFITS EXTEND BEYOND THE SUMMIT

But W.I.S.E. is much more than just the Summit. Its benefits extend to growing connections within the ISA. The number of women attending the 2017 ISA annual convention was notably higher than previous conventions. For many of the women, connecting with fellow W.I.S.E. members was like old home week. Ever the networkers, W.I.S.E. members made sure to connect with other women attendees, welcoming them and encouraging them to learn more about the group at the W.I.S.E. reception held during the convention.

Networking goes beyond the ISA convention, Johns says. "We regularly run into each other and set up meetings at other industry events and social outings at various locations around the country, such as the Pedal Tavern in Milwaukee or holiday party in Chicago. It's always a breath of fresh air to connect with W.I.S.E. members whenever we see each other."

Ed Gerber, ISA president, sees the value. "There's real energy and power when like-minded people get together to share their passion around similar topics of interest. The W.I.S.E. network within ISA is a great example of that. They're on a mission to advance the development and influence of women executives in our market and, toward that end, they're achieving ground-breaking results in driving diversity within our industry and ISA. We appreciate what this wonderful network has accomplished and are thrilled to have them as an integral part of our association."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Sandy Johns, national account manager for Milwaukee Tool and immediate past chair of W.I.S.E., says the W.I.S.E. group connects members with industry partners who can help drive business forward.

YGMILL
Universal Milling Line

Compact Product Range
and Cost Effective Solution

*Save *50% When you choose YG-1 Universal Line*



**Based on independent studies of customers measuring price and value*

- SET APART BY VALUE
- STANDS ALONE IN PERFORMANCE
- YG-1 SMART CHOICES

YGMILL
www.yg1usa.com

YG-1 TOOL CO.
730 Corporate Woods Parkway Vernon Hills, IL 60061 U.S.A
PHONE: 800-765-8665, Technical Assistance: 888-868-5988



Marisol Fernandez, vice president for Bunzl's U.S. Safety Business and chair-elect for W.I.S.E., is passionate about the importance of strong leadership for the future of the industry and W.I.S.E.

Jennifer Murphy, president of NetPlus Alliance in Lockport, New York, implemented ideas she picked up at W.I.S.E. in her buying and marketing group for industrial and construction supplies distributors.

"I have carried the W.I.S.E. torch to our own annual meeting, hosting a breakout event for women executives, enabling them to build relationships and create a support network for each other within our group. This has brought more women to the Industrial Supply Association and helped facilitate continued growth with W.I.S.E.," Murphy says.

The chair-elect for W.I.S.E., Marisol Fernandez, vice president for Bunzl's U.S. Safety Business, is passionate about the importance of strong leadership and its development for the future of the industry and the value of W.I.S.E.

"Leadership is about being able to drive the necessary results through others and can take on many different shapes, indirect and direct. In order to shape the future of our industry and maintain its overall health long term, we are extremely focused on leadership. Members have access to better leadership tools. For example, in a previous Summit, we introduced an assessment of communication styles. This process helped members better understand aspects of effective communication, which is a criteria in being an effective leader," Fernandez explains.

She adds that it's common for members to pick up the phone or send an email to another member to discuss a business issue.

"We are careful to protect confidential information, yet we find ways to discuss market information and tools available that can help us to better manage our businesses," Fernandez says.

When facing a particularly challenging problem in a previous role, Fernandez says, "Discussions about a challenging market place in 2016 led to more creative solutions back in the office."

BECOMING A MORE INCLUSIVE INDUSTRY

To face continuing challenges, it is essential to have capable leadership. Companies that aren't hiring and promoting women in their organizations are missing out. Data show that corporations see greater gains when they invest in the women in their ranks by ensuring they are represented in leadership roles and set up for professional success. Recent research from the Tepper School of Business, among others, validates that smart companies do, in fact, experience profitable outcomes associated with hiring, utilizing and retaining women. Involving more women leads to an increase in collective intelligence in teams and organizations.

For the industrial supply industry, there are multiple opportunities for companies to take the lead in hiring and promoting women. In preparing for this year's Summit, Cathy Pendrick provided these numbers:

11% estimated percent of women currently working in industrial wholesale

74% women who feel under-represented in leadership teams due to industry bias toward men

70% women who would remain in manufacturing if they were to start their career today

Ensuring the strong engagement of members is mission-critical for W.I.S.E. The next chapter of the W.I.S.E. story will focus on how W.I.S.E. helps ISA companies recruit and retain young talent and develop future women leaders. This is increasingly important for the industrial market as McKinsey & Company research shows that gender-diverse companies are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.

The W.I.S.E. networking group encourages everyone in the industry to take an objective look at their companies and ask the following questions:

■ **If you have women leaders who aren't members and attending Summits – why not?**

■ **If you don't have any women in your organization who can participate in W.I.S.E. and its Summits – why don't you?**

■ **And if you aren't able to consider W.I.S.E. because you are not an ISA member – why not join? IS**

Gail Ludewig, president of Total Works, is a marketing communications expert and W.I.S.E. communications chair. Being part of W.I.S.E. supports her passion for women's equality in the workplace. Reach her at gail@totalworks.net.



LUDEWIG

WHERE THE MROP CHANNEL IS DOING BUSINESS IN 2018

Save the date for the 2018 convention and take your opportunity to:

- Connect to the whole channel
- Network with top leaders
- Get education that moves you and your business forward



ISA ANNUAL CONVENTION
APRIL 14-16, 2018

Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD
isaconvention.org