

## Colson on the Move...

by Don Laux, President and General Manager Colson Caster Corp.

Dear Valued Partner,

A wise man once said, "When you are through changing, you are through." Well, we aren't through, and since the world doesn't stay the same, Colson won't either. That's why we are constantly looking for ways of proactively adapting to our ever-changing industry of material handling. Having said that let me start by thanking all who participated in our 2009 Distributor Customer Satisfaction Survey. Learning what you think and what you expect helps us adapt. It is Colson's goal to not just meet your expectations but to exceed them. So although we were pleased that, according to the survey, overall satisfaction for Colson was 80% 'satisfied' or 'extremely satisfied' we now are driven to move everyone into the 'extremely satisfied' category. So, stay tuned for our continuous improvement activities!

The purpose of doing surveys is to learn from them and change where needed. For example, 70% of you are not using the container program. That's why our pallet program is on track for full launch. We want China direct pricing to be available to all, even for pallet size orders. A couple other noteworthy pieces of information we learned from the survey and will be addressing are as follows:

- 90% of you felt that timely response on inquiries was very important. And, over 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that their RM is quick to respond.
- 70% of folks receive non-standard quotes within 48 hours or less.

Now, the fourth quarter of 2009 is already underway with many changes in process: from the way our manufacturing facility is laid out; to new products for new applications; to how we handle lead management. Below I would like to discuss a few things we are doing to keep business moving. But, no matter what we are doing, the end result and objective is always an increase in competitiveness and in the bottom line for Colson and our distributor network.

Throughout all of these changes and improvements, I would like to acknowledge and commend Colson's plant staff for their ability and willingness to adapt. Over the past few months, our manufacturing facility has seen many changes in layout facilitated to create the most streamlined processes possible. In the end, we have created a more economical and efficient flow throughout the plant, including a marked reduction in material handling.

I think I can say with certainty that lead management is a challenge for every business. Of course, we like a challenge, so get ready for improvements to our lead management processes over the next few months. Our mantra and expectation for 2010 is 'Let no lead die.' We will

Quarter 4, 2009

### New Products



ST Series Forks  
[\(Click here for more info\)](#)

### Success Story



Colson Heals Hospital Carts  
[\(Click here for more info\)](#)

### Colson In the News

New Equipment Digest:

Colson Brings New Enforcer  
[\(Click here for more info\)](#)

Yahoo! News:

Colson Energy Conservation  
[\(Click here for more info\)](#)

actively be refining our procedures to guarantee time spent only on pursuit of the most qualified leads, as well as following each lead through the sales cycle to closure. Following the leads completely through the pipeline will involve taking the time to double check that leads are worked, as well as insuring that lead data is being completed within our lead tracking system for analysis and continued improvement. Since our lead tracking system will be updated as part of our new sales tools site, this process will be much easier for both our sales staff and distributors to complete. The end result will hopefully be more closed deals and more quantitative data to help us beat all of our sales projections and to find the best lead sources for you to ensure your continued success.

As a vendor, we know it's imperative for Colson to listen and respond to our customers' needs. In many cases, we are listening to requests for products that perform as good as existing products but cost less. That's why the Colson purchasing team is forever searching for more competitive sources throughout the world. Many times you will find us, literally, on the move as we are responding to you because the Colson staff wants to be where you need us. Although we continually adjust to our changing world and business, some things like in-person service have still not gone out of style. Even in this day of emails and video conferencing, if you have a problem or a situation that would best be solved face-to-face, we will be there. Colson staff is willing to do everything possible to make sure your challenges are solved.

It is a great and fascinating time to be in business. We are committed to making the right changes and sustaining the right traditions that will prove to keep us successful for the next 125 years. Thank you all for adapting, adopting, and changing along with us! Hey, didn't we just launch a product called 'Transforma'?

See you all soon, and the best of this holiday season to you and your families!

## Colson Highlights

**New Sales Tools Website Coming Soon!:** Good Communication has always been an important part of any business effort, and today with all of our online access technologies it is even more so. As the result of your requests to continually improve our levels of communication, specifically with regard to our online lead tracking system, Colson will soon be launching a new password-protected Sales Tools Website. Not only will distributors be able to more easily manage, update and close leads, but users will also have access, all in one place, to additional material such as field bulletins, excess inventory and new products.

Launch of the Sales Tools Site is scheduled for January 2010. Happy New Year! Users will login from the same 'Login' link in the header of the Colson public website that currently links to the existing Colson Lead Tracking Site. Then, using the same username and password, access will be provided to the new Sales Tools Site.

Sneak Peak: Below are additional capabilities of the new Sales Tools Site!

- User-friendly navigation for ease of use

- Enhanced lead sorting, searching and reporting capabilities
- Additional lead fields, including part number field
- E-mail reminder system for leads not followed up on within 48 hours
- Automatic deletion of duplicate leads
- Written instructions for the site will be available

At Colson we are excited about presenting this improved and critical tool to our distributors and appreciate the opportunity to not only keep the lines of communication open but to improve upon them!

**Testing Testing 123:** From our inception almost 125 years ago, Colson has taken quality and reliability very seriously. Our in-house Engineering Test Lab is the most extensive in the caster industry which is why we are able to offer the industry's leading warranty for all of our Colson branded products. How else does this benefit our customers? Well, since every application is unique, Colson's test lab also provides a means of guaranteeing performance based on customer criteria. This includes ergonomics, environmental conditions and quietness to name just a few.

To further assure Colson products are of the highest quality, we test to the Institute of Caster and Wheel Manufacturers ICWM/ANSI, NSF requirements and to applicable portions of Federal Specifications.

Below are just a few of our test lab capabilities:

**Ergonomic Push-Pull Tester:** This proprietary test apparatus and scenario was developed in-house by Colson Engineering. The push/pull testing apparatus expertly tests products in all of Colson caster series 1 through 8. The testing equipment has a vertical load capacity of up to 2500 lbs and a horizontal push/pull value of up to 750 lbs. Results detail caster performance in both trailing and swivel positions and can be conducted on various floor surfaces, with and without obstacles. The valuable measurements captured provide the ergonomic data for exactly matching caster products with customer applications based on strength and force needed to safely roll, swivel and sustain movement during use.

**Drum Testing Apparatus:** The Colson drum tester has been significantly reengineered and enhanced to match today's tougher and more rigorous endeavors. The unique function of the drum tester is its ability to apply dead weight loads up to 3000 lbs with surface speeds from 1 mph to 20 mph with real-time slow down and start-up capabilities.

**2 Turntable Endurance Testers:** Colson's Turntable Endurance Testers are unique to the caster business since these units have the capability to test four casters simultaneously under various loads and speeds. Each machine has a dead load capability from 100 lbs to 800 lbs. In addition, surface speed can be tested from 1.5 mph to 3 mph, and this machine is capable of starting, stopping and reversing direction through an easily programmed device. The test surface is flat smooth steel with the capability of applying any number of obstacles in the casters path.

Other in-house test lab equipment at Colson includes, an environmental chamber, brake lever endurance tester, 3-D Printer, static load press, and impact testers. Even these do not complete

the testing capabilities at our facility. Sometimes we have to make up scenarios on the fly to fit our customer's application!

As a final note, no caster is one size fits all, and Colson understands that. So, don't forget to put our engineering test lab, sales staff and engineering staff to the test with your application-specific requirements. Collaborate with your regional manager or sales engineer for testing to ensure the proper caster product is recommended for every one of your jobs.

**Sales Tip—Respond Faster:** Life's busy, so it's no doubt that you can't answer every single phone call, text message or email as soon as they come in. But, how about trying to cut your response time for communications you get? It will set you apart. Here's why:

- 1) **A special memory is created.** In our impersonal and non-empathetic world, being called back immediately is unexpected. It's memorable, and doing so will set you apart from everyone else that takes days to reply.
- 2) **It shows you care.** Everyone likes to feel special, listened too and valued. When you respond immediately, customers want to continue doing business with you.
- 3) **Confidence is built.** Quickly responding to a voicemail or text message is a small thing. But, as the old saying goes, if you can't be bothered to do little things, you can't be trusted to do big things. Following through with small things, sets the stage for things to come by letting the customer know how they can expect to be treated in the future.