Innovating for the Future Plan Update **For Distributors**

"Without the IDW, we'd need 3-4 times more staff internally, and even with that extra manpower, the quality of the product data would still not be as good as what we receive from the IDW today."

– Jeff Skiles of Kirby Risk

Innovating for the Future

The Innovating for the Future Plan is an aggressive product content enhancement plan for the Industry Data Warehouse (IDW) that addresses distributors' evolving needs in the growing digital economy. The overall goal of the plan is to **enable more efficient bids, sales transactions and eCommerce capabilities** for distributors. IDEA is collaborating with the Innovation Advisory Council (IAC) comprised of 14 thought leaders from leading electrical distributor and manufacturer companies to execute this plan.

Improving IDW Product Data Quality

Manufacturers are rapidly adopting the **IDW Analytics Tool**, which brings unprecedented visibility to the health of a manufacturer's product data. This tool brings the needs of distributors to the forefront through rating criteria, empowering manufacturers to proactively pinpoint issues and make data quality improvements at their source in their business system. In under a year, manufacturers using this tool have improved their overall appraisal rating by 40 to 400%.

up to **400%**

improvement in data quality appraisal ratings by manufacturers using the IDW Analytics Tool.

nearly **4,000**

distributor locations use the IDW to power their business systems, catalogs and web stores.

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Here's what you need to know about the plan and how your company can work with and encourage manufacturer partners to provide the information you need.

Non-Specific Manufacturer UPC Numbers (98-Series)

IDEA is giving manufacturers the opportunity to link their proprietary UPC's to the 98-Series non-Specific Manufacturer UPC's used extensively in contractor estimating and ordering systems. These numbers are available to the industry through the IDW and can be added to a distributor's business system in three different ways:

- **The "non-Specific Manufacturer" dataset:** Add the manufacturer labeled "non-Specific Manufacturer" to your data extracts request list in the IDW.
- **The "Benchmark Pricing" dataset:** Send an authorization request through the IDW for the manufacturer labeled "Benchmark Pricing", then add this dataset to your data extracts request list in the IDW.
- **The "non-Specific Manufacturer UPC" field:** When a manufacturer populates this new item-level IDW field, the unique product UPC numbers they use in their own systems can be linked with the corresponding generic product UPC numbers used by your contractor customers.

More Granular Product Taxonomy

IDEA recently released the Electrical Attribute Schema v4.0, a standards template that enables manufacturers to communicate standardized product descriptors to you through the IDW. The product categories in the new Schema increased by almost 50% from the previous 3,468 product categories to more than 5,000. This increased granularity provides distributors the ability to **easily introduce new products into eCommerce sites** and get products in front of customers in a searchable manner. **All product categories in the new Schema have been assigned an industry-specific 4-digit code.** This code was developed so that every product category within the more granular Schema has a unique identifier. It will also help to accommodate distributors that can only use 4-digit product category codes in their business system.

IDEA will be working with manufacturers to update their systems with the new codes in 2014.

Normalization of Digital Content

IDEA has developed a normalization tool to map variations of the same IDW product attribute to one consistent format. This will **enable faster, more accurate product searches on distributor eCommerce sites**. For example, if a manufacturer uses the abbreviation "blk" for a color attribute, the IDW will recognize the abbreviation and automatically populate the attribute with the term "Black" so that it can be found by buyers using web searches. This will save distributors time and eliminate the need for additional modifications.

Fifteen of the most frequently-used attributes have been normalized (e.g. brand, color, voltage rating, frequency rating), and additional attributes will be normalized throughout 2014. Distributors subscribed to the IDW Catalog Level now have the option to extract the normalized values, non-normalized manufacturers' values, or both.

Pricing Enhancements

IDEA has made List Price a mandatory field in the IDW to help you conduct customer negotiations and do business with large industrial accounts and government contracts. The IDW now provides List Price for more than 95% of all active products, and additional manufacturers have committed to providing this information to the IDW in the future. This enhancement is now available to all IDW distributor users.

Open Access to Publicly-Available Content

Distributors that subscribe to the IDW Catalog Level will now be able to access publicly-available data from most manufacturers in the IDW (manufacturers were given the opportunity to opt-out of providing this information). This includes the manufacturers they were previously not authorized to access. The following five commons fields are now accessible:

- Seller/manufacturer
- Catalog number
- UPC code
- UNSPSC product category code
- Invoice description (short mandatory field)

All other fields in the IDW will still require specific authorization to access.

Marketing Content for Web Stores

The IDW Bands of Excellence program recognizes manufacturers that have populated the IDW with product marketing content that is essential for a web store: spec documents, attributes, images and descriptions (SAID elements). **This program has been highly successful in recognizing manufacturers for excellence and providing exponentially more marketing content to distributors (marketing content in the IDW increased more than 10 times the first year of this program).**

With the proliferation of distributor B2B eCommerce websites, and the associated demand from end users, the **IDW Bands of Excellence were significantly tightened from the original ranges to more closely align with NAED Supplier Scorecards**, with more stringent requirements for attribute population. The banding levels are now:

- Platinum: 100% of stock products in the IDW populated with all SAID elements
- Gold: 95-99% of stock products in the IDW populated with all SAID elements
- Silver: 90-94% of stock products in the IDW populated with all SAID elements
- Bronze: 85-89% of stock products in the IDW populated with all SAID elements

More than 20 manufacturers have a perfect "100%" score at Platinum and more than 40 are banded. Check the IDEA website to see all manufacturers recognized in the IDW Bands of Excellence.

Links to Contractor Estimating Systems

IDEA will deliver IDW data to contractor estimating systems to fully connect the entire electrical supply chain for the first time in our history. Access to IDW information enables contractors to make buying decisions using the same high-quality product data used by distributors and manufacturers in their daily operations. This connection also enables contractors to synchronize their systems with their distributor trading partners and streamline the quotation process.

How You Can Help:

Encourage your manufacturers to:

- Link their products to the non-Specific Manufacturer UPC numbers
- Send their cross-references to IDEA so that we can provide the information to authorized distributors in a consistent format
- Review and begin populating the newly-released Electrical Attribute Schema v4.0

Please visit **www.idea4industry.com/about/innovating-for-the-future** or contact **info@idea4industry.com** for more information.

2900 Crystal Drive, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22202
p 703-562-4600 • f 703-562-4650 • www.idea4industry.com

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2900 Crystal Drive | Suite 500 | Arlington, VA 22202
P 703.562.4600 | F 703.562.4650 | info@idea4industry.com

www.idea4industry.com

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