The 2011 Distributor Report Card: COMPLETE REPORT

Suppliers score lower on everything except training and merchandising

A *Dealernews* Staff Report

Dealers are more pleased with their distributors' merchandising and training efforts, although both remain weak spots for the industry. Retailers' overall satisfaction with their aftermarket suppliers has declined slightly, especially in regard to return policies, communication and rep performance. These are some of the conclusions from the 2011 Distributor Report Card, a "dealer pulse" survey conducted every two years by *Dealernews*.

We surveyed North American powersports retailers in September, asking them to grade their distributors on 18 criteria ranging from product variety and timely introduction to ease of ordering, customer support and overall communications and consistency. Dealers rated distributors using a 10-point scale (1=low, 10=high). Scores were then tabulated and averaged.

Individual report cards show how distributors performed according to their dealer clientele. The distributors with the most dealer responses made the cut for the November issue, and only these scores were used to calculate industry averages (chart on page 2). Note that this year's number of distributors and some of their identities vary from previous years. (Scroll to page 15 to read scores for the seven distributors that were not included in the November issue.)

SUMMARY

	Advantage Performance Distributing	Biker's Choice	Drag Specialties	Helmet House	K&L Supply	KK Motorcycle Supply	Marshall Distributing	Parts Unlimited	Sullivans	Tedd Cycle	Tucker Rocky	Western Power Sports	INDUSTRY AVERAGE	2009 Average
PRODUCTS														
Availability	7.6	8.1	8.1	7	8.3	7.6	7.7	8.1	7.5	7.9	8.2	7.8	7.8	8.1
Timely Introduction	7.6	8.2	8.2	7.5	7.7	7.9	7.4	8.1	7.5	7.1	8.3	7.9	7.8	8.1
Product Variety	7.2	8.3	8.5	7.7	8.0	7.8	7.6	8.7	7.1	8.3	8.7	7.9	8.0	8.1
Strength of Product Lines	7.4	8.4	8.5	8.3	8.2	7.9	7.6	8.5	7.5	7.7	8.4	7.8	8.0	8.3
Price Competitiveness	7.6	8.3	7.7	8.0	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.5	7.2	7.2	8.2	7.9	7.8	8.4
Quality of Catalog	7.8	8.5	8.3	8.2	8.0	7.2	8.0	8.5	7.9	8.0	8.6	8.3	8.1	8.4
DEALER SERVICES														
Customer/Dealer Support	8.7	8.6	7.5	8.1	8.4	8.9	8.4	7.2	7.9	7.2	8.5	8.1	8.1	8.7
Response Times	8.7	8.5	7.6	8.0	8.5	8.9	8.4	7.3	7.9	7.4	8.4	8.1	8.1	8.7
Ease of Ordering: Website	8.0	8.3	8.5	8.0	6.6	8.1	8.0	8.2	7.5	7.4	8.2	8.1	7.9	8.3
Ease of Ordering: Phone	8.9	8.6	8.5	8.2	8.4	9.2	8.4	8.2	8.1	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.8
Returns/Credit Policy	8.1	8.4	6.2	8.1	7.9	8.6	7.9	5.0	7.3	6.3	8.4	7.9	7.5	8.2
Sales Support/Reps	8.6	8.1	7.8	8.1	7.8	9	7.9	7.5	7.7	6.4	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.7
Sales/Tech Training	7.6	7.2	7.1	7.6	6.9	7.8	6.9	6.8	6.6	5.9	7.3	7.1	7.1	6.8
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.5	7.3	7.2	7.2	6.6	7.9	6.9	6.6	6.6	5.8	7.4	7.0	7.0	6.7
On-Time Delivery	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.0	8.1	9.2	8.5	8.3	8.0	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.9
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP														
Communications	8.5	8.5	7.9	7.9	8.1	9.1	8.3	7.4	7.9	7.3	8.4	8.2	8.1	8.8
Consistency	8.1	8.6	8.1	7.6	8.2	9.1	8.4	7.9	7.8	7.9	8.5	8.3	8.2	8.7
Credibility	8.4	8.6	8.0	8.1	8.6	9.0	8.5	7.7	7.7	8.0	8.5	8.2	8.3	8.8
AVERAGE SCORE	8.1	8.3	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.4	7.9	7.6	7.5	7.4	8.3	7.9	7.9	8.3

The distributors with the most dealer responses made the cut for the November issue, and only these scores were used to calculate industry averages.

BY DISTRIBUTOR

ADVANTAGE PERFORMANCE DISTRIBUTING

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	7.6
Timely Introduction	7.6
Variety	7.2
Strength of Product Lines	7.4
Price Competitiveness	7.6
Quality of Catalog	7.8
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	8.7
Response Times	8.7
Ordering: Website	8.0
Ordering: Phone	8.9
Returns/Credit Policy	8.1
Sales Support/Reps	8.6
Sales/Tech Training	7.6
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.5
On-Time Delivery	8.6
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	8.5
Consistency	8.1
Credibility	8.4
AVERAGE SCORE	8.1

COMMENTS:
This year marks the first time dealers rated Advantage Performance Distributing. The Riverside, Calif.-based company made a good showing. Its average grade of 8.1 bested the industry average of 7.9. Advantage scored particularly strong in phone ordering, support and response times. Dealers were less impressed by variety and strength of the product lines. Despite strong scores generally in service, two California dealers voiced these complaints: “Average at best when it comes to customer service” and “No one from Advantage has called or showed at our dealership in about two years.”

Number of dealers responding: 36
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

BIKER'S CHOICE

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	8.1	8.6
Timely Introduction	8.2	7.8
Variety	8.3	8.5
Strength of Product Lines	8.4	8.8
Price Competitiveness	8.3	8.5
Quality of Catalog	8.5	8.1
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	8.6	9.0
Response Times	8.5	9.1
Ordering: Website	8.3	9.4
Ordering: Phone	8.6	9.6
Returns/Credit Policy	8.4	8.7
Sales Support/Reps	8.1	8.7
Sales/Tech Training	7.2	6.4
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.3	5.7
On-Time Delivery	8.7	9.1
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	8.5	8.4
Consistency	8.6	9.0
Credibility	8.6	9.0
AVERAGE SCORE	8.3	8.5

COMMENTS:
Biker's Choice outperformed both the industry and the other two V-twin distributors in the survey: Drag Specialties and Tedd Cycles. Compared with two years ago, dealers graded Biker's Choice 1.6 points higher in merchandising and POP offerings. The company's grade for training increased nearly a point. But the distributor wasn't able to maintain any of its 9-point-something scores. Some small dealers complained about volume discounting. "This policy forces me to drop my margins to very little while still being excessively high [in pricing]," a Missouri dealer said. Other small dealers had only praise. "Biker's Choice really works with their dealers," a dealer from Pennsylvania said. "Their drop-ship program is especially helpful for smaller dealers who are trying to expand beyond their local market."

Number of dealers responding: 65
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 11

DRAG SPECIALTIES

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	8.1	9.2
Timely Introduction	8.2	8.6
Variety	8.5	9.4
Strength of Product Lines	8.5	9.1
Price Competitiveness	7.7	8.7
Quality of Catalog	8.3	9.2
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	7.5	8.6
Response Times	7.6	9.0
Ordering: Website	8.5	9.5
Ordering: Phone	8.5	9.3
Returns/Credit Policy	6.2	7.6
Sales Support/Reps	7.8	8.7
Sales/Tech Training	7.1	7.0
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.2	6.6
On-Time Delivery	8.6	9.0
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	7.9	9.0
Consistency	8.1	9.1
Credibility	8.0	9.1
AVERAGE SCORE	7.9	8.7

COMMENTS:
Dealers scored Drag Specialties at least a full point lower in product availability, price competitiveness, response times, website ordering and support, as well as in overall communications, consistency and credibility. Drag's notorious returns policy also fell an entire point to 6.2. Dealers were more pleased with the distributor's merchandising, and several dealers made positive comments. "Drag Specialties is an invaluable part of our company," an Oregon dealer said. "We appreciate everything they do for us." An Iowa dealer said, "Best company we ever did business with." A Washington dealer's evaluation was mixed: "Good selection. Poor customer service. Bad return policy."

Number of dealers responding: 84
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 35

HELMET HOUSE

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	7.0	8.6
Timely Introduction	7.5	9.0
Variety	7.7	8.3
Strength of Product Lines	8.3	8.9
Price Competitiveness	8.0	9.0
Quality of Catalog	8.2	9.0
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	8.1	9.0
Response Times	8.0	9.1
Ordering: Website	8.0	8.6
Ordering: Phone	8.2	9.0
Returns/Credit Policy	8.1	9.0
Sales Support/Reps	8.1	9.1
Sales/Tech Training	7.6	8.4
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.2	8.3
On-Time Delivery	8.0	9.2
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	7.9	9.1
Consistency	7.6	9.3
Credibility	8.1	9.3
AVERAGE SCORE	7.9	8.9

COMMENTS:
Helmet House's average score dropped from 8.9 (the top score among distributors two years ago) to 7.9, identical to the industry average. Among the hardest-hit areas: product availability, timely introduction of products, price competitiveness, service response times, on-time delivery and all three "overall relationship" criteria. Bucking industry trends, dealers scored Helmet House lower for training and merchandising, though the scores still bested industry averages. "Many items were low and out of stock in prime season," a Texas dealer claimed. A California dealer said: "Helmet House and my rep do a great job. Objective, organized, with great programs and products. Their stuff is sometimes hard to get because of the demand for it, but it consistently sells through, and that's somewhat rare." Dealers also commend Helmet House for not charging restocking fees.

Number of dealers responding: 69
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 30

K&L SUPPLY

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	8.3
Timely Introduction	7.7
Variety	8.0
Strength of Product Lines	8.2
Price Competitiveness	7.8
Quality of Catalog	8.0
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	8.4
Response Times	8.5
Ordering: Website	6.6
Ordering: Phone	8.4
Returns/Credit Policy	7.9
Sales Support/Reps	7.8
Sales/Tech Training	6.9
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.6
On-Time Delivery	8.1
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	8.1
Consistency	8.2
Credibility	8.6
AVERAGE SCORE	7.9

COMMENTS:
K&L Supply gets its first Report Card ever with an average score that matches the industry average. The Santa Clara, Calif.-based tool supplier scored best for service response times and overall creditability. K&L Supply received its worst scores for website ordering (one dealer noted it wasn't even an option), merchandising and training. A few dealers complained about freight and handling charges. "Shipping is slow and costly," a Pennsylvania retailer said. A Texas dealer gave K&L a nearly perfect report card, saying, "Very high marks because they are more targeted in their product offering and don't try to be all things to all people. They carved out a niche and do it very well." An Iowa dealer agreed: "K&L has what the others don't."

Number of dealers responding: 62
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

KK MOTORCYCLE SUPPLY

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	7.6	7.6
Timely Introduction	7.9	7.4
Variety	7.8	6.9
Strength of Product Lines	7.9	7.5
Price Competitiveness	7.8	7.8
Quality of Catalog	7.2	7.5
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	8.9	9.3
Response Times	8.9	9.1
Ordering: Website	8.1	6.2
Ordering: Phone	9.2	8.4
Returns/Credit Policy	8.6	9.0
Sales Support/Reps	9.0	9.0
Sales/Tech Training	7.8	5.8
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.9	5.5
On-Time Delivery	9.2	9.6
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	9.1	9.6
Consistency	9.1	9.4
Credibility	9.0	9.5
AVERAGE SCORE	8.4	8.1

COMMENTS:
KK Motorcycle Supply exemplified this year's theme of higher scores for training and merchandising, going from mid-5s to upper-7s. The distributor also scored better in product variety and website ordering. "This is a company that really tries to work with the dealer," a West Virginia dealer said. "They treat you like a business partner instead of a customer." Multiple dealers applauded sales reps Rick Bohannon and Jerri Henderson. "Sales reps have always been top-notch with product knowledge, ease of ordering, a no-nonsense return policy and help," said a dealer from the Southeast. "Our phone rep is great," an Ohio dealer agreed. "He just doesn't have the quality stuff we want. The freight program from them stinks." Another dealer complained about the new catalog: "Very difficult to read. Needs to have a separate Harley section if they are going to distribute Harley-Davidson parts."

Number of dealers responding: 69
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 8

MARSHALL DISTRIBUTING

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	7.7	8.2
Timely Introduction	7.4	7.8
Variety	7.6	7.8
Strength of Product Lines	7.6	7.8
Price Competitiveness	7.9	8.5
Quality of Catalog	8.0	7.9
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	8.4	8.8
Response Times	8.4	8.9
Ordering: Website	8.0	8.0
Ordering: Phone	8.4	8.9
Returns/Credit Policy	7.9	8.8
Sales Support/Reps	7.9	9.0
Sales/Tech Training	6.9	7.1
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.9	6.4
On-Time Delivery	8.5	9.4
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	8.3	9.2
Consistency	8.4	9.2
Credibility	8.5	9.3
AVERAGE SCORE	7.9	8.4

COMMENTS:
After barely beating the industry average two years ago, Marshall Distributing this year had an average score identical to the industry's. The company's steepest grade drops came about for its returns policy, sales support, on-time delivery and communications. Even so, many dealers showered nothing but praise upon the company, using phrases such as "the best of the midlevel distributors," "one of the most solid overall distributors," and "smaller company that works real hard." Some dealers were more critical. "Would like to see my backorder status on the website so I can cancel or check on eta dates myself," a Michigan retailer said. "Decent but not spectacular catalog and product range — wish they had more brands," said another Midwest dealer. "Pricing levels off compared to economy," complained yet another.

Number of dealers responding: 71
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 17

PARTS UNLIMITED

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	8.1	8.6
Timely Introduction	8.1	8.5
Variety	8.7	9.0
Strength of Product Lines	8.5	8.9
Price Competitiveness	7.5	8.0
Quality of Catalog	8.5	8.9
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	7.2	8.0
Response Times	7.3	8.3
Ordering: Website	8.2	8.9
Ordering: Phone	8.2	8.6
Returns/Credit Policy	5.0	5.5
Sales Support/Reps	7.5	9.3
Sales/Tech Training	6.8	7.2
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.6	6.9
On-Time Delivery	8.3	8.9
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	7.4	8.3
Consistency	7.9	8.5
Credibility	7.7	8.5
AVERAGE SCORE	7.6	8.3

COMMENTS:
Parts Unlimited may not be communicating with its dealers as well as it once did. Its communications grade fell almost an entire point. “Parts Unlimited could be a little better on notification when backorders become available and also a little more informative as to when out-of-stock items will be available,” a Florida dealer said. Other score drops were in customer/dealer support, service response times, and sales support/reps. Parts’ returns policy received the single worst grade of the study: 5.0. Despite this, many dealers commend the distributor. “Parts Unlimited shows the way with great product presentation and great customer service,” a Pennsylvania dealer said. “When you see a business that advertises and promotes, this shows how they are putting their foot forward in today’s economy.” A California dealer was more succinct: “Good service, good fill rate, good reps all around.” And this from an Illinois dealer: “Parts Unlimited does most things very well. They are hard to beat.”

Number of dealers responding: 159
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 115

SULLIVANS

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	7.5	8.1
Timely Introduction	7.5	7.9
Variety	7.1	7.6
Strength of Product Lines	7.5	8.0
Price Competitiveness	7.2	8.3
Quality of Catalog	7.9	8.5
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	7.9	8.5
Response Times	7.9	8.6
Ordering: Website	7.5	7.7
Ordering: Phone	8.1	8.4
Returns/Credit Policy	7.3	8.7
Sales Support/Reps	7.7	8.8
Sales/Tech Training	6.6	6.9
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.6	7.1
On-Time Delivery	8.0	8.8
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	7.9	8.6
Consistency	7.8	8.8
Credibility	7.7	8.8
AVERAGE SCORE	7.5	8.2

COMMENTS:
Sullivans posted score drops for price competitiveness, returns policy, and sales support/reps, as well as for overall consistency and credibility. The distributor posted no gains in any category. "Very inconsistent in the support of my store," a California retailer complained. "Makes it difficult to rely on them for much of anything." A Pennsylvania dealer had a few complaints: "Minimum for free freight is ridiculous. Catalog is not accurate to stock. No new product in ages!" But a Kansas dealer called Sullivans a "great company to work with." And an Ohio dealer who just signed up with the distributor said, "Online ordering is easy and product information is great. We expect to do a lot more with them in the future, switching our business to them for HJC."

Number of dealers responding: 54
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 21

TEDD CYCLE

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	7.9
Timely Introduction	7.1
Variety	8.3
Strength of Product Lines	7.7
Price Competitiveness	7.2
Quality of Catalog	8.0
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	7.2
Response Times	7.4
Ordering: Website	7.4
Ordering: Phone	8.4
Returns/Credit Policy	6.3
Sales Support/Reps	6.4
Sales/Tech Training	5.9
Merchandising/POP Offerings	5.8
On-Time Delivery	8.5
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	7.3
Consistency	7.9
Credibility	8.0
AVERAGE SCORE	7.4

COMMENTS:
Tedd Cycle attracted more dealer responses than Custom Chrome, which for the first time in four years did not garner enough responses to make the Distributor Report Card. Tedd Cycle's overall average score of 7.4 fell short of Biker Choice's 8.3, Drag Specialties' 7.9, and the industry's 7.9 — but it did beat Custom Chrome's 6.9 from two years ago. Tedd Cycle's lowest marks all occurred in dealer services, even though it scored well for phone ordering and on-time delivery. A Texas dealer said Tedd Cycle "has V-twin parts for older Harleys that others don't," while a New Jersey dealer noted that the company has come "a long way in 40 years. Personal friend over the years. Keeps his key help, cares about the industry." A Kansas dealer had different feelings: "Poor quality parts. I only call them if I have to."

Number of dealers responding: 42
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

TUCKER ROCKY DISTRIBUTING

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	8.2	7.7
Timely Introduction	8.3	8.0
Variety	8.7	8.2
Strength of Product Lines	8.4	8.0
Price Competitiveness	8.2	8.3
Quality of Catalog	8.6	8.5
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	8.5	8.8
Response Times	8.4	8.7
Ordering: Website	8.2	8.7
Ordering: Phone	8.5	9.1
Returns/Credit Policy	8.4	8.3
Sales Support/Reps	7.9	8.7
Sales/Tech Training	7.3	7.7
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.4	7.7
On-Time Delivery	8.5	9.0
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	8.4	8.9
Consistency	8.5	8.7
Credibility	8.5	8.8
AVERAGE SCORE	8.3	8.4

COMMENTS:
Despite having one of the industry's best reports cards, Tucker Rocky bucked the general trend of improved training and merchandising scores. But the company did improve by a half-point in product selection and availability. Dealer comments were mostly positive. "Tucker Rocky is by far the best at working with the dealer as a business partner to achieve common goals," a Texas dealer said, praising the company's online ordering, returns policy and merchandising. "They have product in stock with quick shipping," a dealer from Iowa said. "Returns are no hassle. Questions are answered promptly, and if they don't have the answer, they don't guess; they will find out." Of course, there also were complaints, including this one from Virginia: "You can't put the TR consignment program in two dealers in a town and expect the third to carry the same products as its competition."

Number of dealers responding: 156
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 83

WESTERN POWER SPORTS

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	7.8	8.2
Timely Introduction	7.9	7.9
Variety	7.9	7.8
Strength of Product Lines	7.8	8.1
Price Competitiveness	7.9	8.7
Quality of Catalog	8.3	8.7
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	8.1	9.2
Response Times	8.1	9.1
Ordering: Website	8.1	8.6
Ordering: Phone	8.4	8.7
Returns/Credit Policy	7.9	8.8
Sales Support/Reps	7.9	8.9
Sales/Tech Training	7.1	6.7
Merchandising/POP Offerings	7.0	7.2
On-Time Delivery	8.4	8.8
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	8.2	9.2
Consistency	8.3	7.8
Credibility	8.2	9.1
AVERAGE SCORE	7.9	8.4

COMMENTS:
Western Power Sports saw lower grades for price competitiveness, customer/dealer support, service response times, its returns policy and sales reps, and its overall communications and credibility. Note, however, that many of these drops were from two-year-ago scores that were in the 9s, a rarity this year. “Fantastic company — they care about our business and actually try to help us improve it,” a Virginia dealer said. “The entire company, from sales to tech groups to accounting, are great, friendly people,” a dealer in the Southeast said. “They also are more relaxed in minimum order quantities to get free shipping.” Midwest dealers like the one-day shipping provided by the new Indiana warehouse. An Ohio dealer also applauded “good pricing, monthly specials that are actually useful, and by far the best online ordering experience! We have zero complaints and nothing but praise for WPS.” Some dealers did complain about things such as backorders, product selection and lack of POP materials.

Number of dealers responding: 112
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 33

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RESEARCH

The Distributor Report Card: The Outtakes

See how dealers graded seven other suppliers

Below are seven report cards for distributors that, although not making the cut, garnered a respectable amount of dealer responses.

Survey background: We surveyed North American powersports retailers in September, asking them to grade their distributors on 18 criteria ranging from product variety and timely introduction to ease of ordering, customer support and overall communications and consistency. Dealers rated distributors using a 10-point scale (1=low, 10=high). Scores were then tabulated and averaged. The individual report cards below show how distributors performed according to their dealer clientele.

CASTLE SALES

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	7.4
Timely Introduction	7.3
Variety	6.9
Strength of Product Lines	7.4
Price Competitiveness	7.4
Quality of Catalog	7.3
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	7.4
Response Times	7.4
Ordering: Website	7.2
Ordering: Phone	7.9
Returns/Credit Policy	6.9
Sales Support/Reps	6.9
Sales/Tech Training	5.9
Merchandising/POP Offerings	5.6
On-Time Delivery	8.0
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	7.3
Consistency	7.6
Credibility	7.7
AVERAGE SCORE	7.2

COMMENTS:
Castle Sales received its highest grades for on-time delivery and phone ordering. The company scored lowest for training and merchandising, two industry weak points. Dealers also gave Castle Sales a relatively low grade of 6.9 for sales support/reps. "Too many independent reps that carry their book don't really know what they are doing," a California dealer said. Another California dealer agreed: "Any time my rep comes, he doesn't seem too prepared." A Michigan dealer said he would like the company to adopt a better freight policy.

Number of dealers responding: 34
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

CUSTOM CHROME

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	5.9	6.6
Timely Introduction	6.0	7.4
Variety	6.4	7.5
Strength of Product Lines	6.2	7.6
Price Competitiveness	6.4	7.4
Quality of Catalog	6.9	7.9
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	6.5	7.1
Response Times	6.3	6.5
Ordering: Website	6.2	7.3
Ordering: Phone	7.2	8.2
Returns/Credit Policy	5.9	6.9
Sales Support/Reps	6.2	6.8
Sales/Tech Training	5.2	4.2
Merchandising/POP Offerings	5.0	5.3
On-Time Delivery	7.1	7.2
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	6.3	6.9
Consistency	6.2	6.3
Credibility	6.5	6.5
AVERAGE SCORE	6.2	6.9

COMMENTS:
Compared with its report card two years ago, Custom Chrome's grades fell by at least a full point in several categories, including timely introduction of products, variety of products, price competitiveness, quality of catalog, website ordering, phone ordering, and returns policy. The distributor improved a full point for sales/tech training, but the grade was still a dismal 5.2. Despite the low marks, an Alabama dealer commented, "No complaints, always great." A Texas dealer said the reps are hard to reach but are "quite knowledgeable and really strive to rectify any problems that arise."

Number of dealers responding: 33
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 11

DIXIE INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	6.3
Timely Introduction	5.2
Variety	6.5
Strength of Product Lines	6.5
Price Competitiveness	7.8
Quality of Catalog	5.2
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	7.8
Response Times	8.3
Ordering: Website	5.9
Ordering: Phone	8.1
Returns/Credit Policy	8.1
Sales Support/Reps	8.0
Sales/Tech Training	5.8
Merchandising/POP Offerings	5.5
On-Time Delivery	8.4
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	8.1
Consistency	8.0
Credibility	8.3
AVERAGE SCORE	7.1

COMMENTS:
Despite scoring low for its catalog and the timely introduction of products (5.2 and 5.9, respectively), Dixie International seems to have an above-average overall relationship with dealers. Dixie reps also scored relatively well with an 8.0. "Kent McNair is the best sales rep in the motorcycle industry that we have ever had, period," an Ohio dealer said. Three other dealers agreed, one calling him "one of the good guys."

Number of dealers responding: 21
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

MAGNUM DISTRIBUTING

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	7.9
Timely Introduction	7.8
Variety	7.9
Strength of Product Lines	8.0
Price Competitiveness	8.4
Quality of Catalog	8.0
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	8.2
Response Times	8.3
Ordering: Website	7.3
Ordering: Phone	8.7
Returns/Credit Policy	8.2
Sales Support/Reps	7.5
Sales/Tech Training	6.0
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.1
On-Time Delivery	8.7
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	7.9
Consistency	8.2
Credibility	8.2
AVERAGE SCORE	7.8

COMMENTS:
"All Okay," said an Ohio dealer who gave Magnum Distributing a nearly perfect report card. "Great people," a Kentucky dealer said. "Adds different product lines each year, makes a good practice at keeping up with new items," an Ohio retailer noted. Another Ohio dealer disagreed: "There's no 'face' to this company, nobody to talk to, and while their prices are generally very good, there are few if any product updates over the year. Communication with the dealer is essentially zero." A Virginia dealer voiced this complaint: "Have some issues on delivering the correct products. You order a specific box of spark plugs and receive the wrong ones. Also, when they are out of stock of something, they do not get it back in stock until the next year."

Number of dealers responding: 20
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

MIDWEST MOTORCYCLE SUPPLY

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	7.0
Timely Introduction	7.0
Variety	7.3
Strength of Product Lines	6.9
Price Competitiveness	7.7
Quality of Catalog	6.7
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	7.7
Response Times	8.1
Ordering: Website	6.5
Ordering: Phone	8.0
Returns/Credit Policy	7.2
Sales Support/Reps	7.4
Sales/Tech Training	6.1
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.3
On-Time Delivery	8.0
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	7.5
Consistency	7.6
Credibility	7.4
AVERAGE SCORE	7.2

COMMENTS:
Dealers seem to be telling Midwest Motorcycle Supply that it needs to improve its catalog, website ordering, training and merchandising. The Pevely, Mo.-based distributor scored comparatively well for service response times, phone ordering and on-time delivery. Only three of the 23 dealers responding to the survey chose to comment. “I like my rep, but he often doesn't know the answer to my questions,” a California dealer said. “Don’t know about this crew,” said a Kentucky dealer after giving the company nearly all 6s and 7s. A New Jersey dealer claims too many websites offer Midwest products for just 3 percent above dealer cost.

Number of dealers responding: 23
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

MTA

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE
Availability	8.1
Timely Introduction	7.9
Variety	7.0
Strength of Product Lines	7.8
Price Competitiveness	8.2
Quality of Catalog	7.5
DEALER SERVICES	
Customer/Dealer Support	8.3
Response Times	8.2
Ordering: Website	7.9
Ordering: Phone	8.5
Returns/Credit Policy	8.2
Sales Support/Reps	8.4
Sales/Tech Training	6.9
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.8
On-Time Delivery	8.5
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP	
Communications	8.1
Consistency	8.3
Credibility	8.5
AVERAGE SCORE	8.0

COMMENTS:
For the most part, MTA's grades varied little from industry averages. Only in variety of products did it differ a lot, scoring a full point below the industry's 8.0. The distributor's returns policy and reps did better than average. A Missouri dealer said the distributor has "worked hard to offer us smaller shops better pricing (easy free freight, $50 order qualifies) to fight back and stay in business with against the large stores that carry an unfair purchasing-price advantage. We are gradually using them more and more." Said an Ohio dealer: "A quiet leader in some products. Great ATV tire kit supplier!"

Number of dealers responding: 28
Number of dealers responding in 2009: NA

NHJ POWERSPORTS

PRODUCTS	2011 SCORE	2009 SCORE
Availability	6.7	7.8
Timely Introduction	7.0	8.7
Variety	6.9	8.0
Strength of Product Lines	6.8	7.6
Price Competitiveness	7.8	8.7
Quality of Catalog	7.5	8.1
DEALER SERVICES		
Customer/Dealer Support	7.7	9.3
Response Times	7.8	9.5
Ordering: Website	7.0	7.9
Ordering: Phone	8.1	9.3
Returns/Credit Policy	7.6	8.4
Sales Support/Reps	7.6	9.5
Sales/Tech Training	6.0	8.1
Merchandising/POP Offerings	6.0	7.9
On-Time Delivery	8.6	9.1
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP		
Communications	7.7	9.5
Consistency	8.0	9.1
Credibility	7.9	9.1
AVERAGE SCORE	7.4	8.6

COMMENTS:
Twice as many dealers graded NHJ Powersports than did two years ago, and they weren't nearly as kind. Three dealers complained of too many out-of-stock and back-ordered products. "I rated these guys a 10 in 'consistency' due to their consistently being out of stock of two-thirds of what they list both normal and on special," said an Illinois dealer, who continued: "Sales 'specials' are sent out with too few days till expiration, and sometimes with zero quantity. NHJ sends out infrequent full-color, two-sided promotional flyers with dealer cost pricing shown. We could 'tag over,' but that would look like shit." Despite the negative comments, NHJ's average score of 7.4 isn't terribly lower than the industry average of 7.9.

Number of dealers responding: 22
Number of dealers responding in 2009: 11

END REPORT