RBSC Reports

Winter 2014

From the Editor

Hello! Happy New Year and warm wishes to you and yours in 2014.

It was a busy 2013. Q4 primary research for the home furnishings industry shows manufacturers are encouraged by the recent growth uptick. And, a foodservice competitive benchmarking study confirmed that operator purchasing consolidation is growing, even among mid-sized restaurant chains.

Best regards
Judith Binder

Insights

Home Furnishings industry cautiously optimistic

Growth has been modest and pretty stagnant in the last 4-5 years. Everyone is trying to get back the numbers. However, with evidence of new home construction and greater confidence in the economy, consumers are more willing to spend money on their homes. With the 2013 uptick, 2014 seems to have positive momentum. I interviewed manufacturers who forecast an average range of 7%-12% growth YoY through 2015. Still, margins remain squeezed.

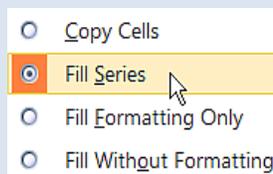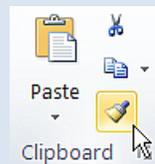### GPOs and Co-ops loom large in foodservice supply chain

Focus groups give clients an opportunity to uncover factors that influence customers' opinions, behavior, or motivation. A restaurant supply chain industry player needed to learn more about customer satisfaction. To provide these answers, I facilitated focus groups with restaurant owners and purchasing executives to develop plans for new products, pricing models, and delivery platforms.

Research Tips

I use Excel on just about every project, so simple time-savers are important. For example, the **format painter** (brush icon) copies the format from a selected cell to any range of other cells.

Fill series is great for quickly numbering rows. Enter your starting number in top cell. Select that cell, right click, and select the target range. Select Fill Series and the range is automatically filled with ascending numbers.

Excel 2013 adds a really great feature called **Flash Fill**. Suppose you want to combine thousands of user names and domain names into valid email addresses. With Flash Fill, you create the first example by hand. Next, you select that example and a range for the fill, just like you're filling a series. But, Excel automatically recognizes the pattern and applies that to all the following cells. Click here to see this on YouTube.

From the Blog

Tricks of the Trade Show (3)– Protecting the "Family Jewels"

Beware. While you are seeking competitive information at trade shows, you are also being targeted by your competitors. Effective counterintelligence is necessary to avoid spilling the beans.

Some years back, Microsoft's annual Mobile and Embedded DevCon (MEDC) – a combination of trade show and technical conference - was probably the most important event for Microsoft's Entertainment & Devices division. more...

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