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Expert Panel Explores Future of Wholesale Distribution***Distribution Executives Hear Recommendations at Forum Hosted by Epicor®***

YARDLEY, Pa., November 10, 2011 – An audience representing 60+ wholesale distribution companies was treated to an unprecedented gathering of industry thought leaders as they recently discussed enterprise resource planning (ERP) and the technology-enabled distributor of the future. The expert panel at the annual Distribution Executive Forum hosted by Epicor Software Corporation, a global leader in [business software solutions](#) for manufacturing, distribution, retail and services organizations, included:

- Kevin Roach, executive vice president and general manager, ERP Americas for Epicor;
- Guy Blissett, researcher at IBM and fellow of the NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence;
- Tom Gale, president, Gale Media/Industrial Market Information, and publisher of *Modern Distribution Management*;
- Dr. Barry Lawrence, director of Texas A&M's Industrial Distribution Program;
- Mike Marks, managing partner of Indian River Consulting Group; and
- Jon Schreibfeder, president of Effective Inventory Management Inc.

The theme of this year's Executive Forum, held in Napa, Calif., was "Distribution 2.0," an exploration of the form and format of the next-generation wholesale distributor, focusing on technology, industry trends, business models, and organizational culture.

"Technology is the linchpin of Distribution 2.0," said Kevin Roach. "Distributors need to have a defined strategy around this key aspect of their business. Technology can and will make a real difference in how you compete in the market."

During the panel discussion, the experts observed that most distributors are currently using only 20-30 percent of the technical functionality in the ERP systems they have bought and paid for; and today's consultative selling model requires more than just product knowledge, but a more technically competent and adept sales force, as well.

In looking at the future of wholesale distributing, the panelists also suggested that instead of serving merely as an inventory storage house, companies should focus on becoming the "intellectual controller" of the supply chain, introducing reliability into the processes between supplier and customer as a true value-add. The experts encouraged distributors to "analyze the value dynamic among you, your vendors and your customers, to create meaningful differentiation." Other topics covered by the group included

strategies for directing field sales; the use of customer stratification, predictive analytics and central warehousing; and the role of buying groups and master distributors.

A post-event survey of attendees indicated they received tremendous value from this year's Executive Forum, giving it an average rating of 9.16 out of 10. "It is great to get rejuvenated with some of the most knowledgeable speakers in regards to distribution and profitability, and to hear the direction that Epicor is taking to continue to improve my business," commented Greg Domino, president, Anderson Pump & Process, of Brookfield, Wis. Plans are currently under way for the next Distribution Executive Forum in fall 2012.

News Facts

- A panel of half a dozen distribution industry experts discussed ERP and the technology-enabled distributor of the future ("Distribution 2.0") before representatives from more than 60 distributors at the annual Distribution Executive Forum hosted by Epicor Software Corporation
- Although technology is the linchpin of modern distribution, most distributors are currently using only 20-30 percent of the technical functionality in the ERP systems they have purchased

About Epicor Software Corporation

Epicor Software Corporation (recently combined with Activant Solutions Inc.) is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail and services industries. With nearly 40 years of experience serving midmarket organizations and divisions of Global 1000 companies, Epicor has more than 33,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor enterprise resource planning (ERP), point of sale (POS), supply chain management (SCM), and human capital management (HCM) enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional and global businesses demand. The Company's headquarters are located in California, with offices and affiliates worldwide. For more information, visit <http://distribution.epicor.com/>. Follow Epicor on Twitter: [@Epicor](#), [@EpicorEMEA](#); [@EpicorAU](#); [@Epicor_Retail](#) and on [Facebook](#).

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Contact: Kathleen Lang
Marketing Communications Manager
Epicor Software Corporation
215-493-8900
klang@epicor.com