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Coors Dist. Co. of Fort Worth: Execution Excellence

Written by Amanda Baltazar  
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Coors Distributing Co. of Fort Worth relies on its excellent reputation and business acumen to keep business strong. Thanks to this, the 44-year-old company typically does not get involved in price wars that are seen elsewhere in the industry, and does not deeply discount. "We compete instead on the execution level in stores," says president Larry Anfin. "We try to service the customer and stock when they need it."

This means delivering every day to grocery stores and twice a day on weekends, and delivering beer to draft accounts until midnight every day and 10 p.m. on Sundays.

This level of execution is just one of the things that Anfin has learned over his 36 years at the company, which was started by his grandfather, John McMillan, in 1966. Anfin joined the team at 14, working in the recycling center and then doing everything from running routes to line cleaning and merchandising. His three brothers also work at the company.

During his decades with the company, Anfin has seen many changes, both with Coors Distributing Co. and in the beer distributing business.

In terms of the company, the biggest change has been the number of SKUs it carries. When it started, there were a total of three or four SKUs, but that's now ballooned to around 200. While it started distributing only Jax Beer products, when the company was granted the distribution rights to Coors, that was the only brand it carried for around 20 years. Now, 88 percent of business comes from Coors—48 percent from Coors Light and 30 percent from Keystone Light. The company no longer carries Jax products.

The format of these beers also has changed. Fifty years ago at least 90 percent of product sales were in cans whereas now, 63 percent of sales are canned products, 21 percent are bottles and 16 percent kegs.

Business also has become less simple over the years, Anfin explains. In his grandfather's day, beer was sold from the back of a cart that traveled around the local area. Now, delivery guys carry hand-held computers and technology pervades the business, meaning reporting anything is much faster.

But things continue to go well for Coors Distributing. Business is robust, despite some of the difficulties caused by this year's plummeting economy. There's also plenty of potential in the two counties the company distributes to (Johnson and Tarrant) to sell more beer, Anfin says, since Johnson is almost untapped, but the population is growing. Coors Distributing's business is almost evenly split down the middle between on- and off-premise accounts, with 1,300 to 1,400 of each. The company's largest distribution channel is convenience stores—1,100 to 1,200 of them—followed by grocery stores. About half of those accounts are chains and half are independents.

But the year hasn't been without its challenges. Some restaurants in the area have closed, taking their beer business to the grave with them, and some consumers are trading down in the brand of beer they drink—to Keystone Light, for example.

One thing that's not changed over the years for Coors Distributing, however, is its community involvement—something that Anfin's grandfather felt strongly about. "We want to be really involved in the community and we work with different organizations such as the Brothers and Sisters Organization, the Better Business Bureau and the American



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Cancer Association," says Anfin.

Anfin sits on 13 different boards; the company donates money to different organizations and Anfin's brother Danny helps organize fund-raisers. It's this community work that helps keep customer relationships strong, says Anfin.

**VITAL STATS**

**COORS DISTRIBUTING CO. OF FORT WORTH**

**PRESIDENT:** Larry Anfin

**HEADQUARTERS:** Fort Worth, Texas

**EMPLOYEES:** 215

**ANNUAL VOLUME:** 5 million cases

**GOALS:** To be the best service company in the industry for beverages.

*From Beverage World December 15, 2009*

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