

Sid Fly—The Water Guy for Manufacturers



Flyco

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Sid Fly is the first to note he's difficult to place in any one niche of the water treatment industry. He is a distributor and manufacturer's rep, all rolled into one. Flyco, the manufacturer's rep agency, currently works with leading water treatment product manufacturers. "Our mission is simply to help our customers grow their respective businesses by answering the phone every time it rings and by always doing what we say we are going to do," Fly says. "Our goal is to help the companies that we represent in developing and maintaining an excellent reputation for delivering quality products with exceptional service." As a rep agency, it's a small business, but the firms Flyco works with are substantial and recognized as some of the best in the industry. The company's market share in Mexico, Central and South America is respectable and growing.

Hydro Source LLC, which Fly owns and operates with business partner Don McGhee, is working on a new version of Turbidex™ (an advanced sediment filtration media) that will redefine the word efficient when it comes to sediment filtration. "Look for this product to be released sometime in 2010," advises Fly. "The Turbidex brand is developing at a fast pace." Hydro Source already has distribution in place throughout much of the world's markets.

A different starting point

Fly was actually a student of landscape architecture and design. One of his science courses dealt with depletion rates of natural resources, specifically water, which planted a seed for him. Years later, when a cousin heard Fly might be interested in water treatment, he was advised to "go and talk to this guy named Sonny." In 1990, he was given the opportunity to work in an entry-level position for Alamo Water Refiners in Texas, which opened the door that changed his life. "I still miss Sonny Cammack and will be forever grateful for the good times we had and for everything he taught me," said Fly. He formed his own company in 2004, shortly after attending the WQA show in Baltimore, MD.

"Most of what I am currently doing has been a process of 'learning on the wing', so to speak," he said. "With a wife and four children, and no source of income, it didn't take long to learn to fly (no pun intended!) It would be very shortsighted if I didn't mention my wife, Marcella, and her faith in me during this time of transition. When you feel unsure of the future and

By Denise M. Roberts

the one you love says, 'do whatever you want' and they say it because they believe in you...wow!"

Bill Hall, Sr. of Alamo Water was also instrumental in Fly's development. He was Fly's predecessor and when he retired, Fly assumed the responsibility of growing Alamo's international market. Growing up in Mexico had provided Fly with a fundamental knowledge of the rich culture that exists beyond our southern borders. This inherent appreciation of the people of Latin America has been instrumental in helping to grow sales in the region.

Flyco works with Clack Corporation, manufacturer of a complete line of softener and filter valves that incorporate the experience of an entire industry into the general design. "I'm fortunate to work in an environment that is very light on management and very heavy on personal responsibility. Rich (Clack) has created an atmosphere where everyone at the table has a voice and all opinions are considered. The team we have put together is a dynamic cross section of personalities and this is one of the key things we offer as a company. The lines of communication between our customer base and our management team are very direct and, in this age of lightning fast customer expectations, I believe our responsiveness provides our customers with a great advantage. Clack Corporation is hard to keep up with when it comes to innovation. They recently showed their new solar-powered WS1 valve in Orlando, FL, and there is more to come."

Fly also works with G.A. Murdock, a company that provides customers with excellent service. "We manufacture a top quality line of quick connection fittings as well as tubing and other ancillary water treatment components. Most orders are shipped within 24 hours and in over four years, I have yet to have a customer complain due to a mistake at the factory."

Influences make a difference

Fly's personal philosophy is to be passionate about whatever he does and encourages others to embrace that path. "If your conscience wakes you up at 3 a.m. because you forgot to take care of a customer, take care of it right then and there and be grateful that you remembered." There are a few important inspirations for him. One is a statement made by hockey great, Wayne Gretzky upon his retirement. "When asked how he came to break so many records in his sport he simply said that while

other players were chasing the puck, he always tried to get into a position where he thought the puck was going to be. That kind of planning is the hallmark of success," Fly says. The other quote is from a good friend of Fly's in Mexico who said, "It used to be that the big fish ate the little fish, but now it is the fast fish that eats the slow fish."

One of the driving factors for the industry, according to Fly, is modern telecommunications technology. "Clearly, the Internet will be crucial to getting your information out to the world, but companies that sell far outside of their region, with no 'boots on the ground' to support their sales, will eventually suffer. As

we all know, there is no such thing as a maintenance-free water system. "

Establishing distribution in all the Latin American countries is Fly's near-term goal. Through continuous technical training and extensive travel, the company expects to earn its fair share of the market for water treatment products. "If all goes well, I'll be playing guitar on the beach somewhere in 10 years," he said. For many, Fly is a regularly featured entertainer at WQA Aquatech, and it's hoped he will remain so until he finds that special beach. ♦