

Motion Industries Office Products Sales a 'Non Story,' Says SPR

Just prior to the conference, OP-Software, which tracks online pricing in a number of industries, including office products, MRO, safety and jan-san, announced it had found Motion Industries, another subsidiary of S.P. Richards parent company Genuine Parts, was operating as what it termed "a noteworthy rival to our independent office products dealer customers."

"Motion Industries has caused us particular concern due to the number of products on their website that are also contained in both the United and SP catalogs and being offered to the general public at aggressive pricing," OPSoftware said.

Manufacturers include 3M, Avery, Brother, HP, Sanford and more. Some Sparco, Genuine Joe and Elite Image items were also found on the site," the company added.

At a Town Hall Meeting held during the ABC, SPR senior management described Motion Industries' office products involvement as a "non-story."

"Motion is a \$4.2 billion company that sells in the MRO space," S.P. Richards president and COO Rick Toppin told attendees. "They have over 3.5 million SKUs and they buy direct from the same manufacturers that we do, like Kimberly Clark and Georgia Pacific, be-

cause their customers ask for products like that.

Toppin said S.P. Richards own analysis had revealed some 6,000 SKUs that were common between SPR and Motion Industries but, he stressed, Motion does not source product from SPR. It's their business and they determine what items to sell and what those sell prices are."

In response to the charge that Motion sold SPR proprietary brand product, Toppin said SPR research had identified two SKUs that Motion had sold, a Sparco binder clip and a clicker counter that had been part of the Motion product file since

1994 and 1996 respectively.

Additional SPR products sold by Motion had been purchased from an independent dealer, Toppin added.

In a follow up conversation with S.P. Richards senior VP of marketing Jim O'Brien, he stated that "by company policy, we don't even sell to our parent GPC or any subsidiary, products that can be used for their own use."

"There's nothing happening [relative to Motion Industries] that you should feel uncomfortable with," Toppin told his dealer audience.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



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