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# Best Markets For Selling Industrial Soap



By Cynthia Kincaid  
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Industrial soaps come in a variety of grease-cutting strengths and pleasant aromas, and are effective for washing grimy, hardworking hands. And some are even waterless, offering convenience.

But, don't be fooled by the word industrial. These hand soaps contain coconut, palm, citrus, walnut scrubbers, and natural glycerin. In other words, modern industrial soaps are tough on hands and nice on the nose – but still tough on dirt.

The industrial market represents 15.3 percent of distributor sales, according to *Sanita*'s "Report On 2010 Sanitary Supply Distributor Sales." So, there is plenty of opportunity to move product. Those suppliers currently not serving this market can effectively compete with their customers and providing personalized service.

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Manufacturing, heavy industrial and warehousing are big markets for industrial soaps, but others have a need, too.

"If you are a food manufacturing facility, you're usually dealing with a lot of heavy grease, but you've still got industrial soap out there," says Denise Neff, director of sales and marketing for the Scranton, Pa.-based [Pennsylvania Paper & Supply](#), a manufacturer of hand washing and heavy dirt."

Distributors should keep in mind that food manufacturing requires an E2 rated industrial soap.

The automotive industry also is a heavy user of industrial soap, which is used for cleaning a technician's hands.

"They tend to use a heavier grit because they have a lot of oil on their hands," says Kari Hus, president of Santa Clara, Calif.-based [Pacific Janitorial Supply](#). "Auto machine shops because they need something to cut the oil off their hands."

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Sten Hutzenga, sales leader at Spring Lake, Mich.-based [NIGROS](#), says that the industrial manufacturing base is very open to industrial soaps because they are trying to keep their environments clean.

“Anyone in the automotive or furniture industry typically needs to demonstrate that their clean facility, so they are more likely to invest in keeping it clean,” he says.

It’s not just manufacturing and industrial facilities that can be heavy users of soaps. Many government agencies can also use their fair share.

“Cities buy a lot of waterless hand soaps for the maintenance crews out doing [municipal] work. Hus. “They like to put the waterless industrial soap right on their trucks.”

But because of budget constraints, Hus finds cities can’t always choose the highest quality or most expensive soaps.

“They like better products, but sometimes they just go with the lowest bid,” she says, especially in government [accounts].”

Other industries can be just as open to stocking industrial soaps, including hospitals and government buildings.

“You can walk into the back house of a resort with a sample and talk to them about the benefits. As long as the pricing is in line, you can move product pretty quickly,” says Neff.

The proper location of soap dispensers can also impact sales of industrial soaps. Placing dispensers in restrooms and heavy traffic areas can ensure they get used.

“If you are talking about a food operation, there are a lot more sinks throughout the plant than there are in manufacturing facilities,” says Neff, so facilities should position a dispenser near those sinks. Areas for soap dispensers typically include maintenance areas, loading docks and grease traps.

Selling industrial soap isn’t difficult, but it does take some thought and preparation for doing it successfully. Distributors have to understand their customers’ need for a particular soap and demonstrate how the product best fits that need.

Distributors also must know their industrial soap products inside and out, including all the benefits.

“You have to be able to explain to your customer the benefits of your soap versus the one on the wall,” says Neff. “You have to answer any objections and be ready with enough detail that you can answer all their questions.”

*Cynthia Kincaid is a freelance writer based in Columbus, Ohio.*



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