



By Theresa Houck,  
Executive Editor,  
The Journal

# YOUR LITTLE LEAGUE COACH WAS A GENIUS

If your baseball coach did his job and taught you the fundamentals of the game, you already have the essential skills needed for business success. Find out how your Encompass Product Partner suppliers are using these basics to help you — even in this tough economy.

➤ Have you ever seen a professional baseball outfielder drop a pop fly because he was showboating his catch with one hand? Then it's even more painful to watch the runner get extra bases as the outfielder chases the ball around the warning track because another outfielder didn't back him up. Anyone who has played softball or baseball knows that the fundamentals are key to success — back up the fielder, use two hands to catch the ball, hit your cutoff man and run out every hit.

And just as in baseball, the fundamentals are essential for knocking one out of the park in the bottom of the ninth when it comes to winning the game of business.

So, how can you know if your suppliers will still be around in a year? What are your vendors doing to survive this tough economy? Will they be able to continue to provide you with top products and services? And how will they help **you** to ride out these hard times?

Executives from some participating Encompass™ Product Partners in the Rockwell Automation Partner-Network™ answered these questions. These companies are using the business fundamentals of customer-facing

strategy, reducing costs, working smarter and developing new opportunities to make it through this economy.

## The Customer is #1

NEC Corp. of America, a U.S. subsidiary of Fortune Global 200 giant NEC Corp., is a global IT hardware, software and services provider that offers the NEC Express5800/320Fc fault tolerant (FT) servers for mission-critical environments. Like other suppliers, it is examining its cost structures, reducing travel and using more Webcasts and video conferences, and most of all, maintaining focus on its clients.

“We’ve definitely gone back to the basics,” say Jeff Edwards, vice president, Sales – IT Platform Group, NEC Corp. of America ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-nec](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-nec)). “Sales is a numbers game, and we’re setting aside things that are not essential. We’re sticking with the fundamentals by staying focused and intensifying our resources on partners and customers.”

Like NEC, the management team at WITTENSTEIN, Inc., Bartlett, Ill. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-wittenstein](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-wittenstein)), knows the world is getting smaller and creating new opportunities for this manufacturer of alpha servo

tems to provide operators with better context about what's happening on the plant floor.

"Our core team is well versed in programmable automation systems and HMI technology, so we've brought the integrated architecture to video applications in the plant," explains Steve Rubin, president and CEO.

Longwatch's market strength in the water wastewater and power/utilities industries continues to grow even in this challenging economy, and the stimulus package should provide additional opportunities. "Despite the downturn, plenty of communities are expanding their water capabilities, and they have a lot of key assets in the field where video monitoring can help," Rubin says.

## Swing Away!

Most of the executives anticipate a slow first half of 2009, then an upswing later in the year into 2010.

"We'll be able to adapt very quickly when the economy accelerates later in the year because of our size, and that's our forte. We have a plan in place to take advantage of the economy when it turns around," explains Ron Monday, president of Online Development Inc., Knoxville, Tenn. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-odi](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-odi)).

The company serves markets worldwide by supplying enterprise transaction modules (eATM) and control-

## >> Pay Cuts Aren't Unusual, But Paying Them Back Is

Frontline Test Equipment switched to an employee-owned firm in late 2008, and this strategic move has had a surprisingly positive effect. Employees are happy with the new structure and have a new sense of dedication, according to Eric Kaplan, president and founder. This became an important factor in January as the economy's effects really started taking their toll and the company temporarily had to reduce salaries for its 25 employees.

"We're doing everything we can to avoid layoffs. The upside is that because we're now employee owned, everyone has a new sense of shared success for the long term," Kaplan says.

While temporary pay cuts aren't unusual in this economy, Kaplan has made an extraordinary commitment that demonstrates the value placed on labor: He has vowed to reimburse every employee when the economy turns around for the wages sacrificed during the temporary reductions. "It's their company now. We want to pay them back," he says.



"We maintain a tight-knit workforce. I believe people know more about their areas of the job than I do, so my job is to bring out the best in them by giving them a comfortable and safe environment in which to work."

— Steve Rubin, President & CEO, Longwatch, Inc.



ler appliance transaction modules (cATM) for Rockwell Automation programmable automation controllers (PAC) and programmable logic controllers (PLC). Twenty of the company's 33 employees are high-end hardware and software developers.

item North America, Akron, Ohio, ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-itemna](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-itemna)), was on pace for a record year in 2008 before the severe year-end economic declines. "Despite the tough economy, we still anticipate growth in 2009," says Rick Sabo, vice president of sales and marketing.

The company provides technical design support using structural aluminum and modular components to replace welded steel in factory automation, manufacturing and assembly operation processes. Its market share grows at about 250 new customers annually, according to Sabo, due primarily to its strong engineering capabilities.

Like other companies, item North America is investing in resources to better service its customers. For example, it completed a 25,000-sq.-ft. headquarters addition in December 2008 to accommodate large projects and increase efficiency.

## The Basics Make a Winning Strategy

You might have to go extra innings, but this game eventually will turn around in your favor. In the meantime, your Encompass Product Partners are developing winning strategies based on the fundamentals of good business — customer focus, lean operations and new opportunities. The result is a collection of more stable suppliers offering you enhanced products and services. Thanks Coach!

**Rockwell Automation Encompass  
Product Partner Program**

[www.rockwellautomation.com/go/tjencompass](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/tjencompass)

including concept, layout, controls engineering, fluid engineering, process engineering and the manufacturing side," says Reiner Konetschny, director of key account management.

He says tough times make everyone question the processes and tools that have been in place for many years. "What needs to be done and which software solutions to implement become key questions. We have the expertise to optimize and standardize our customers' processes, and we have to transfer that to our market."

### Stimulus Package Looks Promising for Some

Several Encompass Product Partners likely will see new opportunities arise from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the U.S. stimulus package. President Barack Obama signed it into law on February 17, 2009, and it includes measures to modernize the U.S. infrastructure and enhance energy independence.

For example, Bentley Systems, Inc., Brookfield, Wis. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-bentley](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-bentley)) has a comprehensive portfolio of applications that puts it in a good position to grow. The company develops software for infrastructure applications ranging from buildings to

### >> Keepin' It Real

At ESTeem Wireless Modems in Kennewick, Wash. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-est](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-est)), operations in this tough economy are similar to how the company would operate if the economy were booming. "We're doing things to cut costs and be innovative, things that we should do anyway," says Tom Kirchner, president and CEO.

"In addition to watching our expenditures, we don't have a lot of debt, so every blip on the radar doesn't send us into a tailspin," he explains. Kirchner predicts that the economy will hit rock bottom this year, and companies will begin to bring themselves out of this economic funk in 2010.

ESTeem manufactures a line of narrow-band licensed, spread-spectrum licensed and unlicensed Ethernet/serial radio modems for long-range outdoor and indoor applications in the industrial, public safety and federal markets.

Kirchner says his goal is to make the company's product so simple that users do not have to read the users' manual. "We have invested in software to make our product more graphic and user-friendly, like a consumer product. Our users are busy; they don't have time to read manuals," he says.



"There's no standing still or moving backwards; the economic crisis provides a good opportunity to improve and increase market share."

— Reiner Konetschny,  
Director of Key Account  
Management, EPLAN  
Software & Service GmbH



bridges, transit to utilities, and clean energy to clean water. Bentley's Encompass products include promiscuous electrical CAD software.

"We have solutions for all the areas the government is putting money into," says Art Sawall, Bentley Systems, Inc.'s vice president, Global Electrical Business. The \$500 million company has 2,800 employees in 50 offices, which is sizeable for a privately held software company.

Management also is committed to maintaining sustainable operations, even rebranding the company last year to show its commitment to going green. "For the first time, we've employed a person to measure and monitor our carbon footprint. We're measuring how we do everything and setting goals for improvement," Sawall says.

The stimulus package probably will help generate sales within three to six months for Frontline Test Equipment ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-frontline](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-frontline)), according to Eric Kaplan, president and founder. Frontline Test Equipment, Charlottesville, Va., is a \$5 million supplier of industrial protocol analyzers for network diagnostics.

In addition, the company is forging new partnerships to broaden its markets as the demand for industrial Ethernet increases. Kaplan expects the move to industrial Ethernet will continue at an accelerating rate, as will the trend toward the use of wireless sensor networks. He sees major opportunities in the Asia-Pacific market.

"We probably won't see a lot of revenue in 2009, but that will be a big part of our business as we go into 2010 and 2011," Kaplan says.

Longwatch, Inc., Norwood, Mass. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-longwatch](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-longwatch)), supplies software systems for video surveillance and event-based video monitoring sys-



*"We have no competition doing what we're doing. Our sensors and instrumentation design group allows us to tailor to customer needs with our well-rounded staff of electrical, mechanical and software engineers, and that's a marketplace distinction."*

**— Mary Tice, Vice President, Control and Automation Systems, Helm Instrument Co.**



both product and global location diversification helps it compensate for downturns. Presently, the economy primarily affects its North American sales operations. "Fortunately, our other regions' sales are up significantly compared to last year," says Somogyi.

Endress+Hauser, Inc., Greenwood, Inc., is a Rockwell Automation Alliance Partner and Encompass Product Partner ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-eh](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-eh)), collaborating with Rockwell Automation for more than 15 years. The company is privately owned by the Endress family, founded in 1953 by Georg H. Endress and Ludwig Hauser.

This family owned company approaches business from a family-like perspective. "People are our top assets, and we really act on that belief," says Todd Lucey, general manager at Endress+Hauser. He says the company is doing everything it can do avoid layoffs.

Endress+Hauser is feeling the economy's impact like anyone else. However, management is viewing this as an opportunity to enhance its products and service. "In any downturn, if you're focused on the relentless pursuit of improvement, then you come out a stronger company," Lucey says.

Even though the company is carefully watching costs, it hasn't stopped investing in activities that add value for customers. Annually, on average the company invests 10% into research and development, and another 10% into advancements in automation in its manufacturing process. So while scaling back, they haven't gone to zero. "We're unique in that we continue to make strategic investments for better service for our customers," says Lucey.

Privately held Helm Instrument Co., Inc. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-helm](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-helm)), Maumee, Ohio, isn't new to economic peaks and valleys. "We've lived through

many up and down cycles since my father founded this company in 1962," says Mary Tice, vice president, control and automation systems. "So, people here know how to work smarter, not necessarily harder. And we've always adapted our products and diversified our markets."

Helm has fewer than 50 employees, including 11 Wilhelm family members, with average employee tenure of 25 years. The company designs and manufactures control systems for the metal forming and stamping industries, including PLC modules, machine controls, factory automation systems, force transducers and data acquisition software.

Many of its customers are OEMs, and the tough economy has affected its machine-builder customer base. Tice says fewer OEMs now exist in the market, especially in the U.S. Therefore, Helm stays focused on its core business — metal stamping, measuring using sensors and instrumentation. "When one industry starts to decline, we search for new markets to serve," she says.

EPLAN Software & Services GmbH ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-eplan](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-eplan)) is a privately owned, global supplier of CAD/CAE solutions for design of electrical, fluid power, instrumentation and process control systems. The firm offers the EPLAN Electric P8 CAE software for controls design and documentation with integration to third-party systems.

The company is well prepared to ride the economic storm, partly by increasing its market shares in industries such as alternative energy, food and beverage and water wastewater. "We cover the entire engineering process,



*We're part of a large organization [Roper Industries, Inc.], but we operate with an entrepreneurial spirit and can respond to customer requirements much more quickly than our competitors."*

**— Jim Ephraim, General Manager, Hardy Instruments**



components and electromechanical systems. Management's strategy is to be alert and responsive to market conditions, according to Tim Herbst, WITTENSTEIN CEO.

"We understand the importance of supporting customers and partners on a global scale. We have a unique sales network, and supporting that network is our top priority. It's all about the customer for us," Herbst says. San Diego-based Hardy Instruments ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-hardy](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-hardy)) manufactures weight controllers

## >> 'Be Employable' Initiative Provides Free Software and Training for Infrastructure Professionals

Bentley Systems, Inc. offers its Be Employable initiative to help sustain infrastructure careers by helping out-placed architectural, engineering, construction and geospatial professionals update their technology skill sets for today's job market. The goal is to help participants be better positioned as top candidates for employment opportunities.

The program provides free access to Bentley's software portfolio and training. Participants can earn learning units from the Bentley Institute, the company's training organization. Tools available to any out-placed infrastructure professional throughout 2009 include:

- Access to Bentley's V8i software portfolio for non-commercial use.
- Instructor-led online distance learning to eliminate the travel time and cost of traditional training.
- OnDemand eLearning for self-paced learning.
- Comprehensive learning transcripts to help maintain professional accreditation.

For more information, visit [www.bentley.com/beemployable](http://www.bentley.com/beemployable).



"We're already a lean organization, and with the size of our company, we have a quick execution model that allows us to be proactive and responsive to customer needs."

— Andreas Somogyi, Managing Director - Global Marketing and Engineering, ProSoft Technology



and indicators, Allen-Bradley-compatible plug-in weigh scale modules, load cells, scales and a tension controller. The economic conditions have only strengthened the company's determination to provide outstanding customer service, according to Jim Ephraim, Hardy Instrument's general manager.

"We have certain core competencies, including strong technical support and the ability to develop innovative technologies to solve significant customer process issues," he says. "The requirement for these types of competencies does not lose importance in a tough economic climate, but rather is valued more than ever."

Hardy Instruments is allocating additional resources to help customers minimize costs and increase their flexibility. "We visually chart our primary objectives and outline how each department and employee can contribute to achieve these objectives. This ensures that we are indeed focusing our energy in the right areas. We want to be closer than ever to our customers, providing responses in the most expedient manner, and understanding and solving their challenges," Ephraim explains.

## A Different Perspective From Privately Owned Companies

ProSoft Technology, Bakersfield, Calif. ([www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-prosoft](http://www.rockwellautomation.com/go/p-prosoft)), has the same commitment to focusing on its customers. The company develops in-chassis, protocol interface products for Rockwell Automation platforms that support about 60 industrial protocols. It also supplies in-rack flow computers and PCs, stand-alone gateways and industrial wireless solutions.

"The economy hasn't changed our vision; it makes it even clearer. We're reinforcing our commitment to customers and partners," says Andreas Somogyi, managing director - global marketing and engineering at ProSoft Technology. He says participating as an Encompass Product Partner is a huge advantage for customers because ProSoft products integrate seamlessly into Rockwell solutions and allow a common, ease-of-use experience.

With 110 employees worldwide and a network of partners and global distributors, ProSoft Technology has offices in Europe, Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Latin America in addition to North America. The company's strategy for