

# EMERY BREAKS THE MOLD FOR HOBBY DISTRIBUTION

Gary Wollenhaupt

**Emery Distributors** is a family-owned, wholesale, hobby distributorship that operates out of a modern, solar-heated 25,000 square foot warehouse in Easton, Pennsylvania. The company grew out of the family's experiences running a hobby shop. In 1962, Tri-County Distributors opened its doors and later evolved into the Emery Distributors we know today.

With such a long history in the business, a company like Emery can become known for one or two things but actually supports a wide array of hobby products. Emery has earned a spot as a leading distributor for model railroading products but also carries many other lines, including model kits, paints and accessories. As other large distributors have rationalized their offerings, Emery has stepped up its product lines, with more than 50,000 SKUs in the warehouse.

People know us for trains, primarily Lionel, but we carry Revell and Round 2 model kits and paints, tools and many other products," said Josh Emery, president.

As a distributor, Emery strictly sells wholesale to the trade. "Since we do not sell retail, our success depends entirely on our dealers' success," Emery said.

Emery said that the hobby store background helps them understand the needs of retailers and customers.

The customer base is primarily brick-and-mortar independently owned hobby shops and other retailers, such as gaming stores and hardware stores with a model kit section.

Most dealers order through the comprehensive website with a powerful search function to find specific products. But they'll take orders by phone, email, and fax.

Emery has integrated its inventory with the point-of-sale system from Celerant Technology. Through the



POS software, retailers can access Emery Distributors' product catalog, import products and automatically order merchandise for their brick-and-mortar store locations based on min/max levels. Dealers can access Emery's catalog from the POS and import the products they want to carry in-store without manually entering data.

Inbound product flow has started to improve, and in fact, the company is facing a bit of a space crunch in its warehouse.

"The flood gates seemed to open up in the spring, and we have more models in stock than we have had in a while," Emery said. "We're re-configuring our warehouse to bring in more plastic models and basic items."

The Emery team prides itself on fast fulfillment and shipping from the warehouse. Orders that come in by noon will go out the same day. Sometimes,

they can get orders that come in as late as 3 p.m. out the same day, but only one or two orders can be handled that late.

Their service area has expanded over the years. At one time, most orders came from stores within a one-day delivery radius or about 250 miles. Today, Emery serves stores across the country, including California-based retailers that place weekly orders.

At the moment, Emery isn't really looking to add new product lines but is open to items that would be a good fit for their customers.

"We want to do a great job with what we have, but we've been around long enough to know if something is a good line," Emery said. **HM**

*The Emery team, including Josh Emery, left, Cristin Oakley, top, and Rob Hall, above, serves hobby stores across the country.*



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