

ISI Insider



Owner's Corner

New Year Reflections

All things considered—including the persistent economic recession—2011 turned out to be a positive year for ISI overall. And there is good cause to be optimistic about 2012.

- ❖ Although margins in 2011 remained extremely narrow, we benefited from small percentage gains in sales and work orders. Once we got past the year's slow start, ISI was fortunate to have a steady flow of business, making it possible to maintain a field staff of more than 120 over the course of the year. We expanded the sales and warehouse teams, created and filled an Inventory Manager position, and added trucks to our fleet.
- ❖ Over the course of 2011, we developed and launched a campaign to strengthen recognition of the ISI brand. Our "3 P's" theme—Proven, Progressive, Professional—was deployed in newsletters and proposals and it will soon be communicating ISI's core value proposition across the Internet when our new website launches later in the first quarter of 2012. Also in 2011, we started looking for ways to help our valued business partners extend their own brand marketing. A number of client dealers are already enjoying the opportunity to display their corporate logo on ISI work orders and the offer remains open as we move into 2012. [Please contact Kelli Conway (kellie@isi-install.com) to arrange your dealership's co-branding program.]
- ❖ Technology continued to be a vital area of investment and management focus in 2011 as we expanded ISI's information management and mobile communications capabilities. With the installation of more powerful servers, we gave our office staff faster access to data and speeded the flow of information within our network. We completed the migration of our finance and accounting operations to a new system which will integrate effectively with OrderWorks and our external payroll service. Around the middle of the year, we beefed up the mobile communication capabilities and productivity of our sales team members, PCs and senior foremen by issuing iPhones to them. The balance of our foremen will receive iPhones next month.

Working With the Best

Richard Giel has amassed impressive accomplishments in warehouse design and operation and asset management for the office furniture industry in Canada. Now, as manager of warehouse and inventory services for McIntyre Group Office Services, he is responsible for the best-practice operation of warehouses in Calgary, Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto.

We're grateful to Dean McIntyre, the owner of McIntyre Group, for making Richard available to consult with ISI on how we can best maximize the use of our available warehouse space, increase our short-term storage capacity and improve our product tracking capability.

Ready access to the expertise of best-practice leaders is one of the many benefits of ISI's membership in Facilities Services Network. We're proud to be an FSN member and we look forward to learning from Richard Giel.



Jim Sheridan (right), ISI's warehouse manager, welcomed Richard Giel in December for their initial joint evaluation of ISI's warehouses. Richard will return for monthly work sessions in 2012.

- ❖ Our investments in more robust computing and information sharing capabilities in 2011 will ensure effective support for improvements in our warehouse operations that started in the last quarter of the year and will continue into 2012. After taking a hard look at how our warehouse space performs, Jim Sheridan (ISI Warehouse Manager) and I determined that it was time to raise the bar for efficiency and profitability. To fast track the achievement of our goals, ISI is calling on the expertise of Richard Giel, the manager of warehouse and inventory services at our fellow FSN member in Canada, McIntyre Group Office Services. We look forward to continuing our consultation with Richard during in 2012.

As you can see, ISI continues to improve and build for the future. Regardless of the state of the economy, we are committed to ensuring that ISI's clients enjoy the highest-value furniture and facility services available.

In hope of a better 2012 than any of us might be able to envision, I offer my very best wishes for the New Year to every employee of The ISI Companies and to all our clients, near and far!

Use the QR code at right to quickly get to our website. If you're new to using QR codes, we suggest starting with a look at mobile-barcodes.com.



CAREER MILESTONES

We wish to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of the ISI staff members with employment anniversaries in December:

	Years of Service
Ed Pulido	19
Ron Fisher	17
Tony Panici	4

IN THE ISI FAMILY

The ISI family continues to pray for those in ongoing treatment for illness: **Jacqueline Peyton, Polly Strom and Phyllis Wyman.**

We also send our condolences to the family of **Joe Nolasco**, who passed away from heart failure after living with muscular dystrophy for 10 years. Joe was living in Arizona. Please keep his wife, Angelica, and their twins, Christen and Stephanie, in your thoughts.

Matt's son Patrick and daughter-in-law Amanda, had their first child on December 17.



Charlotte Marie Sprenzal was 7 lbs 6 oz and 20.5 inches long at birth, which came a couple weeks earlier than expected.

Her arrival makes Matt a first-time "Grandpa."

We note with sadness the passing on December 26 of **Martin Thomas Murray Jr.**, a widely respected member of the commercial furniture industry. Marty died suddenly while out walking in his neighborhood.

2012 CALENDARS STILL AVAILABLE

ISI 2012 calendars are still available. Don't miss having your very own complimentary issue of this Chicagoland collectible! Contact Kelli Conway at kellie@isi-install.com or (847)513-4319 if you would like to receive one.

Remember to say "Thank You" to co-workers and to our clients who provide the work that keeps ISI in business.



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ISI-Companies.com

Proven ♦ Progressive ♦ Professional

The Construction Scene

It's early to say, of course, but the forecast for 2012 at this point is good. With RFPs now pouring into our office, it appears that the improvement in the economy is finally taking hold in the Chicagoland construction market. However, while market forces may be creating more opportunities to bid, I think the quality of our construction work and the performance of our staff are far more dependable explanations for why ISI Interior Construction is receiving more invitations to bid. They certainly were big factors in the rise in our sales volume in 2011. It's obvious that our team—office and field—have built a great reputation.

Craig Armistead's work ethic, commitment to customer service and dedication to the success of this company are obvious to everyone he encounters. He does a fabulous job and always goes above and beyond the client's expectations.

Sharon McDonough and Jennifer Parra do an equally terrific job of keeping the billing, invoicing, payroll and other back-office aspects of

the business organized and running smoothly. They really have things in order and our clients and vendors appreciate it.

As far as what's hot on our plate now:

▶ We are working with Haggae Construction, one of our many great clients, on the drywall for a bank in Hyde Park. The job will be completed by the end of the month. It's been great to work with the Haggae team again.

▶ We are completing the latest office suite projects for JMB, another general contractor we've enjoyed teaming with during a number of jobs. We greatly appreciate JMB's continued support.

▶ We have a new opportunity working for a furniture dealer with a rush expansion project which needs to be completed by the end of January 2012. Thanks to our sister company, ISI, for providing the referral.

With a January this busy, we look forward to an exciting year ahead and wish you a Happy New Year! — *Wally Meyer*

KUDOS

Thanks to every member of The ISI Companies for consistently providing great client service.

From: Account Manager, California Dealership
Installer: Bruce Paterson (foreman)

"Thanks again. You guys did an awesome job."

From: Project Manager, Client Dealer
Installers: Al Ziarko (foreman), Russ Anderson, Tim Bard, Dave Baumann, Jamie Beres, Kevin Burgard, Andy Byrdak, Gerald Collins, Jim DeVries, John Duncan, Leonel Figueroa, Rick Fisher, Rich Florczak, Paul Gaddis, Matt Gaffney, Albert Garcia, Willie Gildart, Chris Huebner, Tom Hum, Pat Hynes, Ed Kalupski, Kurt Logan, Jim Mack, Chad Miller, Chris Mouw, Kurt Neubauer, John Ohse, Don Palka, John Palka, Kevin, Palka, Tom Parnum, Jeff Peyton, Adam Post, Dan Rogers, Mike Schmutz, Bob Sexton, Jim Sgrignoli, Craig Swiecki, Rick Torrez, Jim Van Hoveln, Ricky Veal, Angel Vizcarra, Craig Wagner, Matt Wagner, Mark Wakitsch, Kevin Wyman

"The guys are doing a great job!"

From: Interior Designer, Healthcare Client
Installer: Frank Merenda (foreman)

"Thanks for all your efforts, Frank. You're a savior!"

From: Dealer Account Manager
Installers: Ken Maschek & Dan O'Keefe (foremen), Russ Anderson, Dave Baumann, Gerald Collins, Rosa Milan, John Ohse, Mark Wakitsch, Al Ziarko

"Thanks to you all for your support and efforts! Please see my client's comments below."

[Client's comments] *"I am incredibly grateful to everyone on the team for the efforts, dedication and going the extra mile. I realize the entire project was not without its challenges and we all had to work a little outside of our comfort zones to get the job done, but you should all be very proud!"*

"The ISI men were gracious today and Ken did a fabulous job presenting to the class. (You can even tell him I said that!)"

From: Dealer Sales Representative
Installers: Tim Beale (foreman), Rob Manley, Alan Rich, Joe Skubak, Craig Wagner

"Thank you for the work your guys did the last couple of days. Tim, in particular, did a fantastic job of making that used product work! All of your guys were very professional and very good at what they do. Next time I need a union quote on a job, I'll be calling you!"

From: Relocation Firm Sales Representative
Installer: Al Ziarko (foreman)

"Your installer, Albert, did a great job on Friday! Thank you for the good service!"

From: Manager of Facilities & Office Services, Corporate Client

Installer: Gary Gocal (foreman)

"Just wanted to let you know that Gary did an outstanding job getting the cubicles reconfigured. They look great, considering we had to rob Peter to pay Paul."

From: Dealership Owner
Installers: John Duncan (foreman), Dave Baumann, Jamie Beres, Fernando Colunga, Tim DeRossett, Jim DeVries, John Duncan, Juan Escamilla, Tim Filafusi, Tony Jansto, Bill Johnson, Rob Manley, Jonathan Masupha, Andy McCarthy, Kurt Neubauer, Wayne Obenauf, Jim Oesterle, Dave Oudin, Tom Parnum, Adam Post, Ed Pulido, Ted Vandersnick, Ricky Veal, Craig Wagner, Kevin Wyman, Al Ziarko

"Matt, your team was a critical part of all this. Please see note from the manufacturer."

[From Manufacturer A&D Specialist] *"I wanted to share a magnificent call I received from the architect last night. She called to say how much she appreciated the work to make the space look so great and absolutely loved how it turned out. This is a great win for all of us. Thank you for all the hard work from your entire team!"*

From: Facilities Manager, Corporate Client
Installers: Kurt Logan (foreman), Matt Gaffney, Willie Gildart, John Ohse, Jim Sgrignoli, Miguel Vargas

"The job went great on Saturday. Kurt and his men did a fantastic job. They worked hard and all of them were very professional as always. Thank you so much."

From: Sales Administrator, NY Dealership
Installers: Al Kass (foreman), Jim Oesterle

"Thank you very much. Per client email below, everything went great!"

[Client's comment] *"I just wanted to give an update on yesterday. The gentlemen were on time (early even) and were very flexible in all our requests. Everything went great! Thanks all!"*

From: Dealer Division Manager
Installers: Jamie Beres (foreman), Dave Baumann, Gary Gocal

"I visited our engineering office in Bolingbrook today where ISI installed the workstations yesterday. The office manager there had nothing but high praise for your guys and how professional they were. I want to thank you again for the manner in which ISI deliv-

ers its services and casts a positive light not only on yourselves but our team as well. Please share our gratitude with the appropriate personnel on your staff. It is truly appreciated by all of us!"

From: Business Development Manager, Manufacturer

"These newsletters are among the best I've ever read. A great combination of personal stories and professional accomplishments. It's always gratifying to see customer feedback, which for ISI it comes as no surprise that it's A-plus! Kudos on continuing to deliver superior performance!"

Outstanding Business Partner

ISI Sales Team member **Tom Robbins** was named Midwest Office Interiors 2011 Outstanding Business Partner, an award that recognizes



consistently excellent service and support in fulfilling Midwest's promise to satisfy client expectations on every order.

Joe Gollwitzer (left in photo), the president of the Woodridge-based Allsteel dealership, presented the award during a Christmas luncheon which was also attended by Matt Sprezel.



Gollwitzer emphasized ISI's importance in building the long-lasting client relationships that are the key to Midwest's success.

The Stumper

What was the first air-conditioned shopping center opened in 1962?

\$25 to first person who submits correct answer. Submit by 01/13/12 to kellie@isi-install.com. Put "January Stumper" as the subject of your email.

December answer: Candy canes. December winner: Jennifer Pizzo of Workrite Ergonomics. (We had a lot of right answers but Jennifer's was the first. Everyone must really like candy canes!)