

ALL IN THE BABY NEWS FAMILY

Stanford Distributing Corporation Celebrates 50 Years

"The best part of being a Baby News store is being able to share ideas about how to be more profitable with others in the same industry. So many times, retailers seem to feel alone in running their store, wondering if they are bringing in the right products, conforming to regulatory issues or having employee issues. With the Baby News stores, we are like one big family.

The group is willing to open up their operations to others and share what makes them successful, or even share their failures. There are a variety of store sizes, so we get differing perspectives from all types of demographics. Merchandise is also available from a shared warehouse, but not restricted to purchasing from the warehouse like some franchise operations.

Having been a member of Baby News for 23 years, I would recommend it to anyone who wants to succeed in the baby business for the long haul."

- Richard Woo, Citikids Baby News Store, San Francisco, CA



Baby News is an association of independently owned children's retailers specializing in quality infant and childcare equipment, apparel, furniture and educational toys. Each member store operates under an individually branded name and is also identified as being a Baby News children's store. The association has the buying power of over 50 member stores, allowing each one to take advantage of the largest selection of the latest, most unique and useful juvenile products at the best prices possible.

As Baby News members, stores are dedicated to offering the kind of friendly, knowledgeable service that customers expect from locally-owned businesses, while at the same time becoming part of a family of retailers that benefit from a proven program of collective merchandising and

advertising. Member stores can enjoy online ordering, drop ship and direct ship services, the Baby News online Registry and ecommerce system, exclusive products and an annual catalog, personalized for each store, among other benefits. Store staff trains as Baby Product Experts, a certification program offered by Texas-based All Baby & Child, Inc.

Stanford Distributing Corporation, the main business arm of Baby News, is celebrating 50 years in 2011, expanding over the years to occupy the current 50,000-square-foot warehouse in Livermore, CA that serves as a distribution center and also as the main office for the Baby News association. Baby News stores are found throughout the west coast to New York, from the Midwest to New Jersey and internationally, from Bermuda to Singapore.

"There are many difficult issues confronting retailing today," says president Roger O'Callaghan.

"However, if you have good people who recognize the value of 'we', you can adjust to the bad times. The Baby News family has always been willing to take some chances and change with the times, but the communality of the business and the willingness to work together remains constant." Roger tells us more about this unique association and its benefits for retailers.

❓ How did Baby News get its start?

- In 1949, Jiri Herrmann opened the very first Baby News store in San Francisco. Jiri also developed the Baby News catalog, which was a direct mail piece sent to pregnant mothers. During the 1950s he was approached by other retailers to develop a consistent program of merchandising and advertising. As more stores joined the group by word of mouth, they formed Stanford Distributing Corporation for the benefit of buying better through larger quantities.

Throughout the years, Stanford Distributing grew to offer product to

other juvenile stores, becoming an exclusive partner of many major vendors and starting a system for inventory control. In 2000, the BNO Inc. corporation was formed with the major function of creating an online registry able to drop ship certain selected products for the registry websites. The website needed to be affordable and functional. We now offer this site to other existing stores not in the Baby News group. BNO Inc. occupies space within the Livermore headquarters to do fulfillment.

❓ How dedicated is the Baby News staff?

- Stanford Distributing is very proud of the caliber and longevity of our personnel. I've been here for 41 years, vice president Scott Shelby for 33 years; our warehouse manager has over 22 years with Stanford; our office manager, 13 years. The corporation also employs very creative computer experts who strive to keep the stores technologically current. Baby News works with nearly all the major companies in the juvenile industry. Baby News is also a board member of All Baby & Child, Inc. (producers of the ABC Kids Expo), participating in all of the functions, trade shows and the Baby Product Experts program.

❓ How do you choose merchandise for Baby News?

- To compete in today's challenging times, Stanford continues to look for merchandise that can be purchased at competitive prices; that builds an inventory for the stores that can be distinguished from what's carried by the mass merchants. The stores give constant feedback and very important input on what they need to carry in their stores, too.

❓ What's the greatest way an association like Baby News helps a retailer in this economy?

- We believe that specialty stores now need to work together to find





Baby News stores are certified **Baby Product Experts**

Learn more @  babyproductexperts.com

exclusive products, get better pricing and develop an expertise on juvenile products that will separate them from the mass merchants. Although Baby News stores pay fees to be part of the association, they all benefit from the partnership they have formed together. All independent stores should consider joining one of the major retail groups in our industry.

❓ **What one membership advantage do you find is universal among all Baby News stores?**

- The secret of the growth of the business has been the interaction of the Baby News store owners. Stanford Distributing was created by the stores to service the association of stores. BNO Inc. was created by the stores to answer the need for an online registry and fulfillment. The registry has over 30,000 items with pictures and descriptions due to the stores' involvement in helping to create the registry program from scratch.

Baby News considers itself a family of stores, which shares many things, from ideas, store volumes and merchandise. The Baby News catalog is a creation of the individual stores in bringing the best products to customers. Yes, nearly all of the growth of Baby News

has been from personal contact with existing Baby News store owners.

❓ **How do potential retailers find out about Baby News?**

- Retailers can find out more about our association by visiting BabyNews.com, our informational website. Meetings are held at trade shows and independently. Stores communicate collectively through online services and the corporation sends out newsletters about business promotions and changes.

"Baby News held our hand when we started our store 26 years ago, offering expertise with lease negotiations, store set-up and initial merchandise buying," says Jana Dagerman of Dagerman's Just For Kids in Las Vegas, NV. "Another Baby News store sponsored us the entire first year to ensure we were successful. The friendships we have made with the other Baby News store owners are invaluable."

As the old saying goes, Make new friends and keep the old; one is silver and the other is gold. And Baby News Stores know all about it. 

