

## **Distributor receives patent for e-purchasing program**

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The U.S. Patent Office has awarded Kenn Fischburg, president of Consumers Interstate Corp., Norwich, Conn., a patent for inventing an Internet procurement method.

Fischburg says he filed the patent for his company's Priority Program on Sept. 6, 2000 "to protect our sales strategy and vision" adding that he also did not want "to violate or infringe on another company if it already held a patent." He was awarded the patent on May 17, 2005. It provides protection for the company for 21 years from the filing date.

"Our e-commerce strategy helps customers save time, reduce steps in the procurement process, consolidate their supplier base and become more efficient when placing orders for supplies," says Fischburg. "For many, it was their first successful exposure to ordering on the Internet." More than 50% of the company's customers now use its Priority Program.

The Priority Program provides Consumers Interstate customers with a before and after procurement process flowchart and organizes a custom list of products they use and could buy through the distributor. A password to the company's website ([www.SuperSupplies.com](http://www.SuperSupplies.com)) provides capability to access a form that lists these products. With the form, customers can place orders without having to search the distributor's complete catalog. Consumers Interstate also provides customers with online reports of purchasing history and usage data as well as online monthly consolidated invoicing.