



# ASA REVIEW

ASA Emerging Leaders building strong networks for next-generation transformation

Q3 25



Roundtable discussions at EMERGE2025 in Las Vegas.  
Photo by Mike Miazga/ASA.

Inside This Issue: ASA Product Data Standard Project launches | How our industry is harnessing knowledge from retiring employees | Revolutionizing distribution through AI

## Empowering the next generation: ASA's mission in action



As the baton of leadership begins to pass, we must understand the mindset, worldview, and aspirations of those who will inherit and transform the industry.

Their voices — paired with the wisdom of today's executives — are essential to reimagining a thriving, modern distribution ecosystem.

Much of ASA's recent success has been driven from the results of Issue Strategic Action Team (ISAT) sessions that helped ASA identify critical challenges facing distribution. The discussions during these sessions surfaced essential inflection points that demanded both member and association focus — ultimately giving rise to the D-NEXT, Project Talent and Project Vitality platforms ASA has developed in recent years.

To continue pushing our thinking further into the future, our executive committee approved another round of ISAT meetings this fall, this time with a gathering of our next generation of owner/leaders who will be inheriting our industry. We will look to this group to help ASA identify "what's next" for those inheriting our industry and how it should drive ASA's strategic thinking to unlock bold and actionable momentum for the industry at large. We'll have more on this in subsequent issues of ASA Review.

First things first. In this issue, we get a glimpse of this in two critical articles that will help our efforts to rethink the future. In our Emerging Leaders article, **Mike Miazga** reviews the group's recent roundtable discussions that will be helpful as our ISAT team looks at the future. In addition, the issue of knowledge transfer from our retiring generation to the next-gen leaders is explored in the results of a recent Quarterly Market Survey our business intelligence unit conducted.

One key result from our previous ISAT discussions and D-NEXT efforts is the recently launched ASA Product Data Standard. I sat down with Texas Plumbing Supply's **Jeremy Fuller**, who chairs the ASA Embracing the Future Strategic Council, to outline why ASA jumped into this major industry issue and the benefits it offers our industry now and in the future.

Also, longtime ASA friend **Dirk Beveridge** explores a new trend of embracing the strength of our industry's family roots and the timeless superpower of independent distributors and its importance to attracting the next generation of workers who are looking for more than just a job and career but a sense of belonging.

**Dr. Mary Kelly**, who spoke at our ASA Northeast and Central regional summits this summer, discusses how as leaders, we cannot eliminate either change or chaos, but we can help our people navigate both better. In fact, she says, uncertainty is a leadership opportunity, but only if we understand how it affects the human brain and what practical steps mitigate its impact.

And with the unprecedented pace of accomplishment, ASA Vice President of Advocacy **Steve Rossi** reviews the first six months of the Trump administration and efforts in Congress to advance our industry issues and what we can expect in the next six months.

Have a topic you would like covered in an upcoming issue of ASA Review? Shoot me an email at [madelizzi@asa.net](mailto:madelizzi@asa.net).

**Mike Adelizzi**  
CEO

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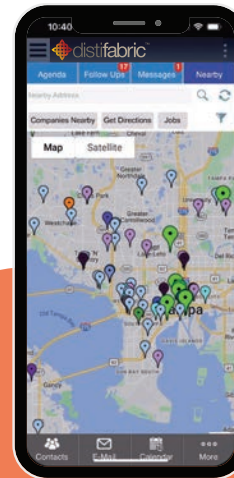


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## CRM for Distributors

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## Reframing the AI decision: It's not 'if,' it's 'how'

By **Jason Sullivan**  
Distro

For decades, technological change management in distribution followed a predictable rhythm: implement a new ERP, roll out a training initiative, launch a pricing system.

Each required months of planning, executive alignment and frontline disruption.

Then came AI.

Suddenly, we're being told that software can do what once required an entire team: quote jobs, respond to customers, recommend products, even orchestrate entire workflows. The promises are bold, and the pressure to adopt is mounting.

But for leaders in distribution, the real question isn't whether to adopt AI. It's how to do it in a way that empowers teams, not overwhelms them. If we step back for a moment, it's clear that we're not facing a technology question so much as a change management one.

### Why AI change management is different

AI isn't just another tool in the tech stack. Done right, it's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to elevate how work gets done. It can accelerate productivity, deepen customer relationships, and empower frontline teams with capabilities they've never had before.

It's not about replacing the hardworking people in the industry. It's about amplifying them. AI should take the busy work off their plate so they can focus on what humans do best: building relationships, solving problems and driving growth.

That also means traditional rollout playbooks of training the team, launching the tool and sending a few reminder emails won't cut it.

This is a new kind of change with different stakes and faster expectations. And with any new unknowns, there are a few important things that need to be clarified and established quickly.



The real question isn't whether to adopt AI. It's how to do it in a way that empowers teams, not overwhelms them. Shutterstock Photos.

Here are three common pitfalls to watch for:

### Common Pitfall #1:

#### Tools without a clear path to wins

AI tools often land with good intentions but little context. A rep might get a slick demo, a login, and a quick message that it will help. By the end of the week, it's gathering dust.

It's not because people resist change. It's because they are focused on outcomes. If a new tool doesn't clearly answer, "How does this help me close more quotes, faster, and with fewer mistakes?" it naturally falls to the side.

The solution isn't more training or reminders. It's choosing an AI that's purpose-built to solve real bottlenecks reps face every day and fitting it into the way they already work. When it makes sense in context, adoption happens on its own and tends to stick.

### Common Pitfall #2:

#### Vendors selling tools, not outcomes

Plenty of AI vendors show up with bold promises, glossy dashboards and polished demos. What they often lack is follow-through.

That might pass in the software world, but not in distribution. You're managing narrow margins, complex workflows and a workforce stretched thin. The last thing you need is software that looks great in theory but doesn't hold up in practice when real business conditions hit.

The right partner understands that success comes from what happens after go-live. Before you commit, ask:

- ➡ Will they tailor onboarding for your team's real needs?
- ➡ Are they available to troubleshoot when it counts?

- ➡ Can they support the messy, real-world edge cases that come up in your business?

These are not extras. They are what separates success from shelfware.

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***"AI isn't just another tool in the tech stack. Done right, it's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to elevate how work gets done"***

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### Common Pitfall #3:

#### A bunch of tools that don't add up

AI point solutions are everywhere. One tool for quoting. Another for call notes. A third for CRM updates. Each one seems helpful on its own. Together, they create confusion and drag.

More tools mean more logins, more training, and more friction. In an environment where every minute counts, that slows everyone down and turns innovation into overhead.

A better approach is a unified platform that supports the entire quoting process, connects the dots between workflows, and feels like one seamless system.

Even better is when the platform can take action. That's what agentic AI delivers.

Agentic AI goes beyond simply surfacing suggestions or highlighting next steps. It understands the context of your business, not just product SKUs and customer records, but timing, exceptions and priorities, and takes intelligent action on behalf of your team.

This isn't AI that waits to be clicked. It's AI that moves with purpose.



Choose an AI platform that's purpose-built to solve real bottlenecks reps face every day and fitting it into the way they already work.

- ➦ It fills out quote requests automatically based on history and pricing logic.
- ➦ It drafts and sends follow-up emails without waiting for rep intervention.
- ➦ It escalates urgent jobs, routes approvals, and keeps the ball moving while your team focuses on what only they can do.

When AI becomes an active participant in the workflow, not just an overlay on top of it, reps stop seeing it as one more system to manage and start viewing it as a true extension of their capabilities.

That's the difference between software that's used and software that's trusted. It becomes a teammate, not just a tool.

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**“Don't ask if AI is right for your business. Ask how you'll lead your people through it.”**

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When AI becomes an active participant in the workflow, reps start viewing it as a true extension of their capabilities.

## What Great AI change management looks like

The best-run AI implementations in distribution share three traits:

### Rapid time-to-value

Reps shouldn't need six months of change management. If AI is working, they should be ramping in days, not quarters.

### White glove support

This isn't about buying software. It's about driving behavior change. That means high-touch onboarding, real partnership and support that sticks.

### Strategic alignment

Your AI partner should understand your goals, like increasing quote volume per rep, improving gross margin, or protecting top accounts. It's not about showcasing their metrics. It's about moving yours.

### Final thought:

#### You already know how to do this

If you've ever implemented a new truck routing system, built a customer loyalty program, or introduced a new sales comp plan, you already understand what's required: clarity, support, and follow-through.

AI is no different. The tech may be new, but the leadership required is timeless.

So don't ask if AI is right for your business. Ask how you'll lead your people through it.

Because the real differentiator isn't who has AI. It's who gets their teams to use it.

**Jason Sullivan is the founder and CEO of Distro, the agentic AI platform purpose-built for distributor sales teams. Distro has empowered industry-leading distributors to harness AI to drive revenue. Contact Jason at [jason@distro.app](mailto:jason@distro.app) or visit [www.distro.app](http://www.distro.app). ■**



## The productivity paradox

*How uncertainty undermines performance and what leaders can do about it.*

By **Dr. Mary Kelly**

Uncertainty is everywhere. It shows up in the economy, in the office, in our inboxes, and in our heads.

Whether triggered by layoffs, inflation, global instability, AI disruptions, or just an avalanche of decisions, uncertainty can drain our focus and dilute our productivity.

As leaders, we cannot eliminate either change or chaos, but we can help our people navigate both better. In fact, uncertainty is a leadership opportunity, but only if we understand how it affects the human brain and what practical steps mitigate its impact.

### The hidden mental tax of uncertainty

At the biological level, uncertainty activates the amygdala — the part of the brain responsible for processing threats. It sets off our fight-or-flight system, making us hyper-alert but less capable of critical thinking. Over time, chronic uncertainty acts like chronic pain. It causes fatigue, emotional burnout and executive dysfunction.

We've seen this play out across workplaces in the aftermath of the pandemic, and we're still seeing it now, as people wrestle with the ripple effects of economic fluctuations and social shifts.

### How uncertainty shows up at work

Uncertainty doesn't just affect individuals. It cascades through entire organizations, creating what I call "focus fragmentation."

You can spot this when people:

- ➔ Struggle to prioritize
- ➔ Avoid decision-making
- ➔ React instead of plan
- ➔ Multitask constantly — but never get anything done well
- ➔ Procrastinate excessively

A recent survey by the American Institute of Stress revealed that **80% of workers experience productivity-related anxiety**, driven by unclear expectations, fear of mistakes and constant change. It's no wonder so many teams feel like they're sprinting in circles.



You can spot focus fragmentation when people multitask constantly but never get anything done well. Shutterstock Photos.

Add in *continuous partial attention*, the habit of being constantly “on” but never fully focused, and it’s clear: even the best employees cannot perform well without structure, clarity, and psychological safety.

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**“As leaders, we can help our people navigate change and chaos better.”**

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## What can leaders do to restore focus?

Here’s where strong leadership doesn’t just matter, it magnifies performance. Uncertainty is inevitable, but leaders can buffer its effects by creating clarity, direction and trust.

### 1. Overcommunicate with clarity and context

People fear what they don’t understand. When leaders communicate frequently, even without all the answers, they build trust and reduce speculation. People can handle bad news. Not knowing anything is actually more stressful.

**Tip:** Use the rule of three — say it three times, in three ways, across three channels. Clarity reduces ambiguity. Ambiguity fuels anxiety.

### 2. Prioritize ruthlessly and visibly

When everything feels urgent, nothing gets done. Narrow your team’s scope to 3–5 *publicly visible* priorities. Review and reinforce them weekly.

**Tip:** Use a “Focus Board” or simple “Objectives and Key Results Tracker.” Make it visual. Make it obvious. Make it stick. I have a 12-Month Business Success and Accountability Planner that I use with my teams and we make the goals visible to everyone. That is free at [www.ProductiveLeaders.com/2025-Success](http://www.ProductiveLeaders.com/2025-Success).

### 3. Coach through decision fatigue

People stuck in uncertainty hesitate. Empower people to act without needing perfection.

**Tip:** Use the “\$10 vs. \$10,000” decision filter: Is this mistake affordable? If yes, take the risk and move forward.

### 4. Model calm, decisive behavior

Your tone sets the thermostat. When you stay composed and consistent, others gain footing, even in the unknown. In the military special operations world, we teach that “calm is contagious.” Be calm when things change and make good decisions. Lead with presence. Your demeanor is more contagious than your words.

**Tip:** Breathe in for four counts, hold for four counts, and breathe out for four counts.

### 5. Protect time for deep work

Distractions destroy productivity. Encourage team-wide “Focus Hours” with no meetings, no pings, no interruptions, but the obvious caveat is that time **MUST** be dedicated to work. An easy way to do that is to ask for results at the end.



When everything feels urgent, nothing gets done. Narrow your team’s scope to 3–5 *publicly visible* priorities.

**Tip:** Try a 90-minute *Pomodoro Focus Session* as a weekly team challenge. Then track how much gets done.

### 6. Recognize wins

Uncertainty feels heavy. Recognizing even small wins lifts morale and motivates momentum.

**Tip:** Start a Weekly Wins board or Slack channel. Any wins count! Public dopamine hits boost performance.

### 7. Equip people with self-management tools

Your team needs real tools to deal with stress, procrastination and overwhelm. That’s where we often fall short as leaders. We talk about time-management, but we don’t *equip* for it.

**Tip:** Provide tools such as:

- **Stop Procrastinating Tomorrow** (book)
- Free worksheets and productivity tools at [www.ProductiveLeaders.com/StopProcrastinating](http://www.ProductiveLeaders.com/StopProcrastinating)
- The 5-Minute Plans, 5-Minute Productivity Plan, and other downloadable tools are in the Leader’s Resource Vault at [www.ProductiveLeaders.com/2025-Success](http://www.ProductiveLeaders.com/2025-Success).

## Final thought:

### Productive people need predictable leaders

Uncertainty is unproductive, but it’s not unbeatable. As a leader, you can’t control every disruption — but you *can* control the environment your people work in. And that’s where the real leverage lies.

Lead with clarity. Prioritize with purpose. Support with structure.

And when your team inevitably gets overwhelmed, remind them: the right steps forward lead to progress.

**Economist, leadership strategist and author of “Stop Procrastinating Tomorrow,” Dr. Mary Kelly also is a retired Navy Commander and the CEO of Productive Leaders. Mary is the author of 20 books and is in the National Speaker’s Association Hall of Fame. You can find her at [mary@productiveleaders.com](mailto:mary@productiveleaders.com). ■**



Dirk talks with Eastern Industrial Supply's Meagan Owen during filming of a "We Supply America" episode. "The more jobs we provide, the better that is and the more we can invest into peoples' lives and interact with people that feel like family," Eastern CEO Kip Miller (Owen's father) says.

## Embracing our family roots: The timeless superpower of independent distributors.

By **Dirk Beveridge**  
[www.dirkbeveridge.com](http://www.dirkbeveridge.com)

As someone who's dedicated the last four years to immersing myself in the heart of independent distribution and manufacturing businesses, I've witnessed something profound.

Walking through back doors, navigating receiving and shipping docks, and engaging in countless conversations with the people who power these operations — from warehouse teams to C-suite leaders — has solidified my belief: family culture isn't just a tradition; it's a strategic superpower poised to define our industry's future.

In 2025, with talent shortages, economic turbulence, and technological disruptions reshaping our landscape, I'm optimistic. These businesses, rooted in values such as loyalty, stewardship, and genuine human connection, are uniquely positioned to thrive. No other organizations on the planet are better equipped to tackle these challenges because, at their core, they're about people first — and I've seen firsthand how that focus creates unbreakable advantages.

My journeys into these companies have revealed a consistent truth: the talent crunch is real, but family cultures are the antidote. Acute shortages of skilled workers, coupled with disengagement and "quiet quitting," plague the sector. Yet, in the businesses I've visited, unconditional belonging changes everything.

Employees are accepted before they prove themselves, treated not as interchangeable assets but as vital family members. This fosters loyalty that I've heard echoed in stories of teams rallying during crises, reducing turnover and countering the "quit and stay" mindset.

As NIBCO President and CEO **Ashley Martin** shared: "Our purpose is to make people owners.

My greatest wish is that they flourish, outside of work and with their family."

As leaders share their experiences, it's clear: emphasizing mutual responsibility — showing up for one another — draws in talent seeking purpose over mere compensation. Independent distributors stand out here, attracting those weary of impersonal corporate environments.

The AI revolution further underscores this edge. I've listened to workers express anxiety about automation upending jobs, yet in family-oriented firms, patient growth and reskilling turn threats into growth opportunities. Without the shackles of short-term shareholder demands, these businesses invest in human-machine collaboration through supportive training. Intergenerational stewardship, a value I've seen passed down like a cherished heirloom, enables long-term planning. Teams I've met embrace AI with confidence, knowing their development is a priority.

This mindset, born from values that prioritize people, future-proofs operations and sparks innovation in logistics and supply chains. First Supply President and CEO **Katie Poehling Seymour** captured it perfectly: "We're not just changing a process. We're changing it because it makes the people involved in the process better."

Work-life balance trends also align perfectly with what I've observed. Flexible models, such as hybrid setups and shorter workweeks, are redefining productivity amid rising burnout and the "Great Detachment." In the docks and offices I've toured, flexibility flows naturally from family principles — prioritizing well-being as one would for kin. Leaders tell me this builds trust, combating mental health strains through empathy and open dialogue. The result? Resilient, high-morale teams that sustain performance in demanding roles.

It's a human-centered approach that enhances satisfaction and counters disconnection in volatile job markets. **Robyn Brookhart**, president and CEO of Liberty Pumps, described her company's community vibe: "We are truly a community. The synergy that shows up is how people support one another. It is such a caring vibe."

Economic uncertainty — recessions, inflation, supply issues — tests resolve, but the stability I've observed in these businesses is inspiring. Lower capital burdens and people-focused adaptability ensure loyalty during downturns. Relationships forged on docks and in warehouses weather storms, emerging stronger through human resilience. **Nick Porter**, CEO of Porter Pipe & Supply, emphasized service: "If I'm in service to the people here they will exponentially multiply that service. It's up to them to take it. They get to look themselves in the mirror and say I did that."

In the warehouses I've toured, like those at APR Supply, leaders like President and CEO **Scott Weaver** embody this resilience by viewing growth not as an end, but as a means to create opportunities.

"If I'm having a college student come into our leadership training program, I have to give them a career," Weaver said. "I have to give them a path to stay here for 40 years. You can't do that without growth. Because that growth provides opportunity."

Rooted in a family value of gratitude over entitlement, this mindset ensures profits are reinvested to innovate and support teams, fostering loyalty that turns employees into lifelong partners. It's a reminder that family cultures don't just survive uncertainty — they empower people to build brighter futures together.

Technological shifts demand agility, and here, family commitments allow balanced innovation. I've seen automation integrated thoughtfully, preserving personal bonds while boosting efficiency, keeping firms competitive without sacrificing soul. **Paul Kennedy**, president and CEO of DSG, urged bold thinking: "Leapfrogging incrementalism. How do you dream bigger, think bigger?" he asked.

In the offices and warehouses I've visited, like those at Eastern Industrial Supplies in South Carolina, leaders like CEO **Kip Miller** view their businesses as platforms for profound impact.

"One of my purposes is being able to provide jobs. And the more jobs we provide, the better that is and the more we can invest into people's lives and interact with people that feel like family," he shared.

Through initiatives such as Eastern Cares, which evolved from chaplain services to building orphanages and schools in Tanzania, Miller's team extends care globally, fostering self-sustainability and changing perspectives. "We have it so good in America. It changes their viewpoint. It changes their life," he noted.

This family culture not only builds careers but sows goodness, proving independent distributors are engines for personal, professional and communal thriving.



Dirk shares a laugh with Liberty Pumps' Randy Waldron. "We are truly a community," Liberty President and CEO Robyn Brookhart says of the family-owned pumps manufacturer. "The synergy that shows up is how people support one another. It is such a caring vibe." Photos courtesy of Dirk Beveridge.

Generational dynamics, especially engaging Gen Z, reveal another strength. Younger workers crave purpose, and the meaningful, community-driven roles I've witnessed appeal directly.

Shared goals and values bridge gaps, retaining talent amid evolving expectations. As Martin put it: "The best product of NIBCO is a good person. It wasn't about what we manufactured. It was about the people."

Community building, vital in hybrid eras, comes naturally. The belonging I've felt in these spaces combats isolation, enhancing collaboration and productivity. Poheling Seymour's vision resonates: "To distribute innovation and partnership to our communities for generations."

To harness this, consider a framework that's transformed many I've advised: the Potential Equation. It's a model of mutual obligations where employers offer resources, trust and growth opportunities, while employees own their development. This equation — employer responsibility plus employee accountability equals unlocked human potential — shifts focus from outputs to empowerment. In practice, it involves conversation guides for mentorship, templates for development plans, and a culture of joint journeys. Businesses I've visited adopting similar approaches report gains in retention and performance, affirming my belief in its power. Porter echoed: "My purpose is to create more opportunities for more people — more lives made better."

Through my travels, one realization stands out: independent distributors are unmatched because their DNA is inherently people-centric. Corporate giants prioritize scale over soul, but these family-rooted firms build legacies through human truths.

This optimism stems from what I've seen and heard — their values will craft a prosperous future. Let's embrace who we are, empower our people, and lead as a force for good.

In distribution, it's the strength of our humanity that delivers enduring success. ■

Check out the PHCP-PVF Industry Calendar at [www.asa.net](http://www.asa.net).



ASA's Business Intelligence Unit recently conducted a survey of ASA members on the topic of the transfer of industry knowledge from retiring veterans to the next generation. *Shutterstock Photos.*

# How ASA members are harnessing key knowledge from a retiring generation

By **Mike Miazga**  
Vice President Sales-Operations  
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One of the key takeaways from the American Supply Association's LEAD strategic planning retreat earlier this year in Dana Point, California was the question of how is the PHCP-PVF industry addressing the top-of-mind subject of the transfer of industry knowledge from retiring veterans to the next generation?

As an objective of both ASA's Operational Excellence and Embracing the Future strategic councils coming out of that planning retreat, ASA's Business Intelligence Unit commissioned a recent survey of association membership, tackling that specific, critical question.

The response to the survey was as plentiful as any Quarterly Market Survey the BI unit has tackled with nearly 100 individuals from ASA-member companies taking the survey, ranking only behind the monster bath-and-kitchen query in 2024 that required results to be broken into three parts due to a high volume of responses.

A departure from the usually lengthier QMS offerings, this survey on industry knowledge transfer was direct and to the point with four main questions, two of which were designed to trigger percentage responses and two others designed for long-form answers.

On the somewhat concerning side, 86 percent of respondents to the survey say they do not have a program in place to transfer industry knowledge to the next generation of their company.

That led into the next question — playing into that 14 percent affirmative response — what strategies/tools is your company using to harness today's tribal knowledge so it will be available to that next generation? Respondents were then asked the best way to document/share that knowledge.

Responses were extremely varied, ranging from sharing documents/notes, management development programs, longer onboarding processes with a veteran mentor involved to the use of video technology and all points between.

"We have been recording training videos for our internal program," one respondent said. "We also require in-person

office staff so this knowledge can be passed down. Even so, it's a challenging problem."

"We do biweekly trainings for the overall knowledge," another survey respondent wrote. "We have implemented a CRM for the customer-level tribal knowledge and we have a constant bullpen of salespeople. We have two to four junior outside salespeople at any time who are tasked with learning the industry prior to fully hitting the field."

Another respondent also emphasized cross training is "the best way I know and witnessing how the relationships they have with the customer flows, the things that are communicated and how they prefer to be engaged with (joking nature, know their family, personality types, etc.)," the respondent explained. "The product knowledge is only part of it. The customer will tell you what they need if they know you care about getting them taken care of. I think if there is any importance of knowledge transfer it's simply where do you go or who do you get pricing/technical info for a specific product. The value in transfer from retiring to the new guy, in my opinion, is the relational trust. Be relatable and be attentive like the older guys are."

One individual noted their company posts protocols for certain activities and also are posting sales records in a logical way on a server so younger employees can easily access history.

Another industry company is hard at work on a comprehensive knowledge transfer protocol.

"We are working on creating learning materials with the knowledge of our seasoned employees," this individual said. "The current plan is to sit with employees and ask questions, shadow their processes and document as much as possible. Once these interviews are complete, the plan will then be to consolidate this information into one platform. Our HRIS system has an LMS that we can embed content into, so we want to utilize it as much as possible. This will allow us to share the content with all employees, update as needed, and assign training from the content where appropriate."

As expected, the topic of artificial intelligence came up multiple times in survey responses.

**86%** percent of survey respondents say they do not have a program/process in place to gather knowledge from retiring employees.

**64%** percent of respondents offer some form of either part-time or consulting work to retired employees.

"I wonder if we could use AI to capture that information?" one respondent asked. "You could have staff input their knowledge into ChatGPT and organize it. You could even build out a bot to follow said person's work throughout the day and capture what they know?"

And this from another survey respondent: "We are working to embed training in our LMS that will help with this. We are starting to work on mentoring programs that can help with the transfer of knowledge — leveraging AI tools that help speed up an employee's ability to find information and accurately provide what the customer needs. The last subject is really a way to circumvent the need to download tribal knowledge and assumes that AI tools have the information."

### Keeping retiring employees engaged

The survey also asked ASA-member companies if they offer part-time and/or consulting opportunities to retiring employees as a way to help bridge/lessen that knowledge-transfer gap. Sixty-four percent (2 out of 3) of respondents say they do offer some sort of part-time/consulting opportunities for retiring employees.

"It helps bridge the learning gap," one survey respondent wrote. "It helps the retiree prepare for retirement and allows us time to share their knowledge."

"We would like to keep the door open for our employees that retire," another noted. "They have so much knowledge that must be shared."

And finally, ASA members were asked how big of a problem the knowledge transfer gap is and how quickly could it worsen.

"It might not be a big problem today, but it will be in the near future," a respondent said. "It's something we need to think about now and prepare for."

Another respondent posed an interesting theory. "It may be a problem for some, but we forget the customers," this individual noted. "Knowledgeable customers are retiring and the next generation replacing them may not be as knowledgeable/trained either, so it may be an even bigger problem. At our roundtable discussion at ASA Central we talked about knowledge transfer, and some felt it wasn't a problem due to things in our industry changing so much we just need to train for the now and not the past." ■

### How Can I Get A Copy Of The Report?

To get a copy of the 19-page report, contact ASA's **Bri Baresel** at [bbaresel@asa.net](mailto:bbaresel@asa.net).



Texas Plumbing Supply's Jeremy Fuller was a recent guest on the ASA Embracing the Future Podcast where he went in-depth with ASA CEO Mike Adelizzi on all that has gone into ASA's new Product Data Standard Project. Photo by Mike Miazga/ASA.

## New ASA product data standard driving industry-wide digital transformation

By **Mike Adelizzi** and **Nils Swenson**  
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During a recent sit-down interview, ASA CEO **Mike Adelizzi** interviewed ASA Embracing the Future Advisory Council member **Jeremy Fuller** from Texas Plumbing Supply on the merits of ASA creating and launching the industry's first-ever product data standard.

During this interview, they discuss what has driven the association to take on this monumental task and the benefits to the industry from launching such an effort.

**Mike Adelizzi:** I'm joined today by Jeremy Fuller, purchasing and inventory manager at Texas Plumbing Supply and a member of the association's Embracing the Future Council who has played a key leadership role in this product data standard initiative. Jeremy, thanks for spending some time with me to discuss the association's effort to create a product data standard for the industry. Before we dive in, can you tell us a little about you, your firm and why you were passionate about helping to create this standard.

**Jeremy Fuller:** Thanks, Mike. I appreciate being here. Texas Plumbing Supply is a family-owned plumbing distributor headquartered in Houston. We have seven locations throughout Texas, serving markets such as Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. My official role is purchasing and inventory manager, but in a family business, everyone wears a lot of hats. I also get involved in IT and e-commerce, and because both areas rely heavily on product data, I found myself digging deeper into how we manage and consume it. That's what led me to ASA's Embracing the Future Council. I attended a NETWORK meeting a few years ago, heard about the product data standard initiative, and knew it was something I wanted to be part of.

**MA:** Let's start at the beginning. Why is there a need for a national product data standard in our industry?

**JF:** Great question. Most manufacturers we work with do a solid job producing product data. The issue is that each one does it differently. Take something like water heaters — manufacturers like A. O. Smith, Bradford White and Rheem

each send data in their own unique formats. That variation creates friction. It slows down time-to-market, creates rework for distributors, and makes it harder to integrate product data into ERP systems, PIMs and websites. What ASA recognized was a huge opportunity to bring manufacturers together and build consensus around a standard format — so distributors like us can receive consistent, clean and compatible data from all suppliers in a given category.

**MA:** Makes sense. But people have tried to create a product data standard before. Why is this effort working when others didn't?

**JF:** I think it comes down to structure and support. ASA has taken a true leadership role. They've helped gather key stakeholders — manufacturers and distributors — and created a process that fosters collaboration. Many manufacturers don't have large data teams. Sometimes there's just one person responsible for formatting and distributing all product data. That person is fielding requests from distributors of all sizes, plus major retail chains.

The Embracing the Future Council formed a working group of distributors willing to review data, identify inconsistencies, and give direct feedback to manufacturers. That feedback loop has been key. When manufacturers hear from multiple distributors asking for the same formatting changes, they understand the value and are more willing to adapt.

**MA:** Let's talk about the standard itself. Are we talking about hundreds of columns of data, each with its own rules?



"What ASA recognized was a huge opportunity to bring manufacturers together and build consensus around a standard format — so distributors like us can receive consistent, clean and compatible data from all suppliers in a given category," Fuller says. *Envato Photos.*



Fuller says ASA has taken a true leadership role with the Product Data Standard Project. "They've helped gather key stakeholders — manufacturers and distributors — and created a process that fosters collaboration," he notes.

**JF:** Yes — and that's why we've broken it down by product category. We have looked at data from core supplier partners and grouped it into logical segments. Then we reviewed each data column — dimensions, weight, color, product description, certifications — and compared how different manufacturers populate that column. For example, one might use "WHITE" in all caps, another might use "white" in lowercase, and another spells it out with extra codes. That creates confusion. So, we asked each manufacturer to align with a preferred format. It's not about changing the data content — it's about creating consistency in how it's presented.

**MA:** That probably seems like a small thing, but multiplied across hundreds of fields and thousands of SKUs, I imagine it becomes a big issue.

**JF:** Exactly. Small inconsistencies cause downstream inefficiencies. Every distributor ends up spending time reformatting the data. It's not that the data is wrong — it's just not standardized. That slows everything from ERP uploads to web display. Manufacturers face the same issue — they create custom versions for each partner. The ASA standard solves this by providing one clear structure everyone can follow. That saves time, reduces manual work, and improves accuracy across the supply chain.

## KEY BENEFITS OF AN INDUSTRY STANDARD

- **Reduces errors and misinterpretations:** Improves accuracy in product information across all supply chain stages.
- **Enhances efficiency:** Consistent data formats reduce time and labor spent on data conversion and integration.
- **Promotes collaboration:** Facilitates better cooperation between manufacturers, distributors, and partners, leading to faster decision-making and response times.
- **Improves order accuracy:** Standardized data allows distributors to access accurate and reliable product details, reducing errors.
- **Eliminates confusion:** Clarifies product descriptions and specifications.
- **Increases operational efficiency:** Helps distributors and manufacturers reduce operational costs and improve the speed and quality of their services.



**MA:** Who's being asked to follow the standard, and who benefits if they do?

**JF:** We're encouraging all suppliers to align with the standard. It's voluntary, but those who do will get fewer formatting requests. Distributors benefit by getting clean data faster. Sales reps and customers benefit from more consistent product info. Everyone in the chain wins when data flows efficiently.

**MA:** ASA represents about 300 distributor firms and 140 manufacturer members, but there are hundreds more outside the membership. That's more than 2,000 businesses that touch this issue. How do you plan to scale adoption?

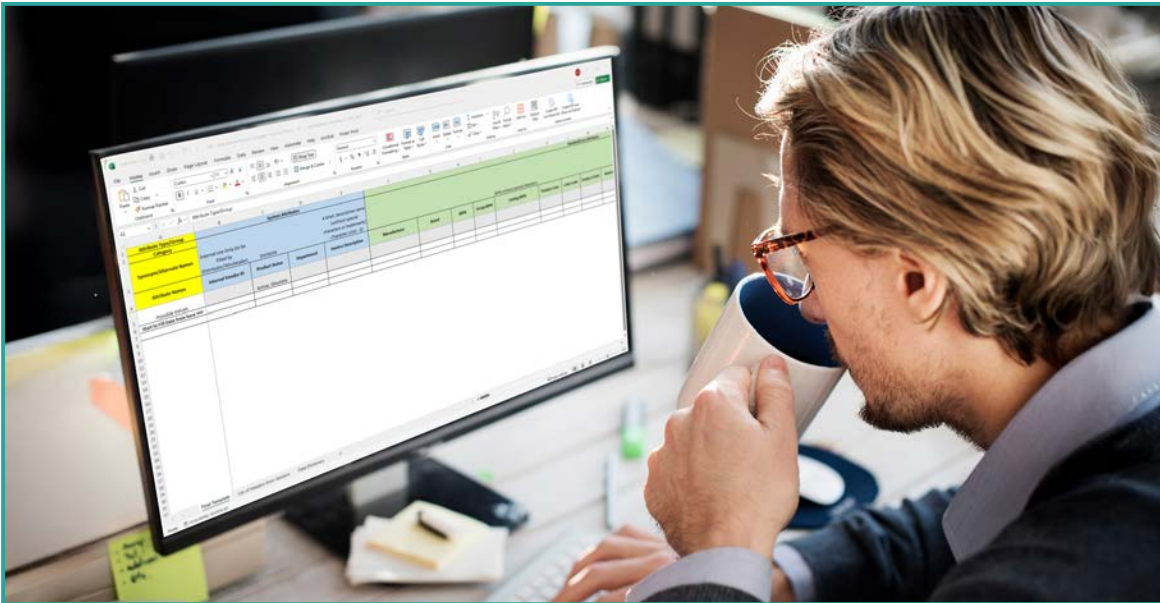
**JF:** We're seeing strong momentum. We started by engaging key suppliers in each category. Once they joined, we brought in distributors of all sizes to support and develop the initiative and encourage supplier participation. As adoption spreads, more distributors are asking manufacturers to send data in ASA standard format — and many already are. It's becoming a self-sustaining cycle.

**MA:** Was there any discussion about ASA creating a full product data library to accompany the standard?

**JF:** We did consider it, but third-party companies already do that well. We believe that ASA's role is to create the standard. By giving the industry a shared structure, ASA helps existing systems and libraries work better. It's a shared benefit.

**MA:** One of the points is how much inefficiency is caused by inconsistent formatting — things as simple as capitalization or abbreviation styles can create hours of extra work.

**JF:** That's right. These small differences force every distributor to reinvent the wheel. Imagine that each distributor receives a spreadsheet from a manufacturer, and before they can even load it into their system, they have to write scripts or apply macros to reformat fields. If one distributor has to do that for 50 suppliers, that's already hundreds of hours lost annually. Multiply that across the industry, and the cumulative cost is enormous. The standard ASA is developing eliminates this at the root level. It's about empowering manufacturers to "get it right once," so the entire supply chain can function more efficiently.



The new standard is broken down by product category, Fuller explains. “We have looked at data from core supplier partners and grouped it into logical segments. Then we reviewed each data column — dimensions, weight, color, product description, certifications — and compared how different manufacturers populate that column,” he says.

**MA:** You also mentioned that some manufacturers have only one person handling all the product data?

**JF:** Yes. We discovered that in many cases there’s one person managing data. That person might be responsible for sending data to hundreds of different customers, each requesting a slightly different format. With our standard, they can maintain one master format and meet 90 percent of distributor needs right away.

**MA:** From what you’re describing, this initiative not only helps reduce labor but also enables faster launch timelines.

**JF:** Absolutely. When a manufacturer launches a new product line, the faster that data can be cleaned, uploaded, and displayed by distributors, the sooner that product can be sold. The time saved accelerates product visibility and adoption. In today’s market, that speed-to-market advantage is crucial.

**MA:** I imagine it also supports digital transformation.

**JF:** Definitely. Many distributors are investing in PIMs, ERPs and e-commerce platforms. Clean data is essential. Without standardized data, these systems can’t function optimally. So even as companies invest in systems, inconsistent product data holds them back. Our standard is the bridge that allows them to realize the full value of their digital investments.

**MA:** If someone is reading this article today and wants to align with the standard — whether a manufacturer or a distributor — what’s their first step?

**JF:** Start at [www.asa.net/industry-standards/product-data-standard](http://www.asa.net/industry-standards/product-data-standard). If you want to get involved or need help adopting it, email [pds@asa.net](mailto:pds@asa.net). ASA or the Embracing the Future Council will connect with you. We welcome new participants from all parts of the industry.

**MA:** Jeremy, this has been a deep and incredibly informative conversation. Any closing message you’d like to share with manufacturers and distributors listening in?

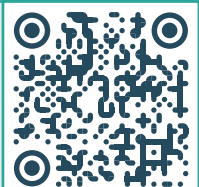
**JF:** Just this — collaboration is the key. We’ve made progress when manufacturers and distributors sit at the same table. The standard isn’t about control — it’s about cooperation. Everyone benefits. And for those who’ve been on the fence, we invite you to take the first step. Visit the website, look at the standard, and reach out.

**MA:** Jeremy, any final reflections?

**JA:** It’s been rewarding. Manufacturer and distributor collaboration has been excellent. We have a strong core group and are gaining traction. What we’re building could expand beyond plumbing — to HVAC, electrical and more. The more we simplify data together, the more efficient we all become. ■

## Questions on How to Get Started?

Interested in learning more about ASA’s Product Data Standard Project? Contact **Nils Swenson** at [nswenson@asa.net](mailto:nswenson@asa.net) and/or visit [www.asa.net/industry-standards/product-data-standard](http://www.asa.net/industry-standards/product-data-standard).





Attendees of EMERGE2025 in Las Vegas took part in the group's longstanding, popular best practices roundtable sessions. EMERGE attracted more than 220 up-and-coming executives this year and set a new record for sponsorship support. Photo by Mike Miazga/ASA.

## ASA Emerging Leaders building strong networks for next-generation transformation

By **Mike Miazga**  
Vice President Sales-Operations

More than 220 up-and-coming executives from more than 80 ASA member companies converged on the Four Seasons Las Vegas for two days of education, best practices sharing and networking as part of the ASA Emerging Leaders' EMERGE2025 event, which set a new record for sponsor support.

As is custom, the Emerging Leaders Division, which has been an ASA special interest group for more than two decades now, hosted its best practices roundtable sessions where wholesalers, suppliers, reps, master distributors and service providers were divided into tables of 10 to discuss current industry challenges and concerns and possible solutions in a well-received two-hour session.

One table of emerging leaders focused on internal operations and company culture, tackling topics such as catering to the current workforce and types of individual personalities and the importance of physically getting in front of customers and getting away from emails instead of phone calls. This table also zeroed in on various aspects of modern-day training and the use of technology to better streamline company operations.

Another table also initially focused on the topic of management best practices.

"Best teams ran well when everything was community," was one comment from the table, while another note stressed the

concept of understanding from the bottom up. "Understanding the needs of various departments throughout the company," the table wrote in its post-roundtable summary.

This particular table also focused on employee training, artificial intelligence use cases, as well as a lot of talk about the supply chain, and chatter on contractor consolidation, home centers and the synergy between suppliers, reps and wholesalers.

In addition to the roundtables, EMERGE attendees took in education sessions on topics such as negotiating skills, how to read body language, how to expand market share and outsell the competition and a keynote address on leadership from NFL Hall of Famer and former Las Vegas Raiders head coach Antonio Pierce.

Networking events included an optional race-car driving experience and an evening out at an English-themed miniature golf entertainment center inside Mandalay Bay, allowing attendees to further establish and cultivate relationships with like-minded up-and-coming leaders.

Also in Las Vegas, the ASA Emerging Leaders again hosted representatives of Operation Rise and Conquer. The ASA EL Division has been a long-time advocate and friend of the Colorado-based organization that empowers and inspires wounded soldiers and veterans to regain confidence and trust in themselves and others.

EMERGE2026 heads to Live! by Loews in Arlington, Texas May 18-20, 2026. 🟩

# ASA Northeast and Central summits attract record crowds



ASA Northeast Summit attendees enjoyed a closing night seafood blowout along the Annapolis, Maryland waterfront. The 2025 ASA Northeast Summit set new attendance and sponsorship records. Photo by Mike Miazga/ASA.

By **Mike Miazga**  
 Vice President Sales-Operations  
 mmiazga@asa.net

Both the ASA Northeast and ASA Central Summit regional meetings established new attendance records earlier this summer, capping off a two-month run started by the debut of the new ASA West Summit that attracted more than 200 attendees in Napa, California.

The 2025 ASA Northeast Summit at The Graduate Hotel by Hilton in Annapolis, Maryland established a new attendance record of 160 attendees, while also setting a new sponsorship benchmark, punctuating the importance of conducting region events that bring together local wholesalers, suppliers and independent manufacturers representatives.

In addition to education sessions on the importance of happiness in the sales process, leading in times of turbulence and a workshop on time management skills, Northeast attendees enjoyed a tour of the nearby U.S. Naval Academy and a closing event seafood bash on the Annapolis waterfront.

The ASA Central Summit, in its second year, had more than 150 attendees at the Loews Arlington Hotel in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and also set a new sponsorship record. Education sessions included topics such as leadership, customer satisfaction and a keynote address on building a brand where ASA's Mike Miazga interviewed Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders Senior Director and reality TV star **Kelli Finglass**. Attendees also were able to spend an evening of networking in the ASA Central suite at Globe Life Field during the Texas Rangers-Kansas City Royals baseball game. ■

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 PLATINUM SUPPLIER PARTNERS



### 2026 Dates

The ASA Central Summit heads north to Minneapolis/Eagan, Minnesota June 9-10, 2026, while the 2026 ASA Northeast Summit heads to Newport, Rhode Island for its fifth anniversary June 16-17, 2026.

# UNCERTAINTY

## What does the rest of 2025 look like?

*What ASA members should expect when it comes to the economy.*

By **Dr. Chris Kuehl**,  
ASA Chief Economist

It seems like forever since we have been able to focus on anything other than trade and tariff policies.

Many other issues have received scant attention in the meantime. We have not even had an opportunity to assess the impact of all these shifts. Just recently, there have been some studies seeking to shed light on what has actually been happening in the overall economy.

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***“What makes this last decade unusually stressful is most of the major disruptions have been manmade.”***

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One of these came from a report prepared for Ernst and Young. It looked back to 2017 and studied the impact of almost 10 years of uncertainty and disruption. This has obviously been more than tariff activity — it includes the pandemic recession, Ukraine war, Middle East conflicts, collapse of the London gilt market and so on. The conclusion is that more than \$360 billion in profits were lost due to these disruptions and uncertainties.

It is obvious that business dislikes uncertainty as executives like to plan and set strategy. What makes this last decade

unusually stressful is that most of the major disruptions have been manmade.

The war in Ukraine was supposed to last a few weeks and is still creating havoc, the global reaction to the pandemic that resulted in more than 100 million job losses and the destruction of the global supply chain and now tariffs that threaten to destroy the existing trading system. It is a lot to adapt to in a short period of time.



The reaction to tariff threats at the start of the year led to massive levels of imports. Shutterstock Photos.

## Two reactions

There have been two sets of reactions. Some have just continued as they originally planned and hope for the best. This either works or fails spectacularly as the environment altered. The more common approach has been to “wait and see.” Many projects have stalled or have been significantly delayed as everyone struggles to determine the costs of inputs as well as the mood of the consumer. This is the reaction that has had the most impact on the ASA members as projects have been stalling. The good news is that most have not been cancelled but the bad news is that these delays could last months.

Collection of data in the late July timeframe is starting to tell an interesting (and somewhat baffling story). It would be logical to assume that all the economic indicators would be sagging and telling a story of imminent decline. The first quarter numbers were downright recessionary with a GDP in negative territory. It bounced back in Q2 to levels seen at the end of last year (between 2.1% and 2.5%).

The reaction to tariff threats at the start of the year led to massive levels of imports. That wave of imports pulled down GDP numbers as GDP measures domestic production. This activity pulled GDP numbers into recession. By the second quarter, that rush to import faded significantly and now this accumulated inventory has started to deplete. By the beginning of Q3 there will be more reorder activity but prices will be much higher and the inflation expected earlier in the year will start to manifest.



There are some 6 million people ostensibly seeking work but they lack the skills needed by the employers.

## Workforce update

The focus on tariffs and trade has obscured the other issues that have been affecting the industrial community. The top of that list is still workforce and the news just keeps getting more challenging.

By the end of this decade the entire Boomer generation will have reached retirement age and that is more than 71 million people. The issue of workforce also involves training and education. There are some 6 million people ostensibly seeking work but they lack the skills needed by the employers. The advance of technology and robotics means that jobs that were once open to those with limited skills are gone — machines do that work now.

The assertion has been that tariffs and trade restrictions that limit imports will allow US domestic producers to gain an advantage and compete more favorably against the importers. It would therefore encourage companies to return to the US as well as encourage foreign companies to set up operations in the US.

It is arguable that tariff protection from import competition will play a role but is that enough to lure companies to produce in the US? For the ASA member this is the key aspect of the new tariff and trade policy. If there is sufficient reshoring, there will be many new construction opportunities. In the last several years the driving factor for construction has been manufacturing — growth of more than 200%. Nonresidential construction has been driven by data center development, warehousing and especially by manufacturers upgrading their facilities so they can adjust to the technology changes.

The company planning a move to the US wants and needs more than a tariff protection. They need availability of a workforce that is trained and ready to adapt to new technical demands. They need an infrastructure (energy, transportation and so on) that supports their development, and they need a regulatory environment that is supportive.

A rational tax system would be useful as well. Further support could come from research and development efforts.

In other words, there has to be a support system to lure companies back to a nation where many costs are far higher than other locations in the world.

**ASA Chief Economist Dr. Chris Kuehl is the managing partner and co-founder of Armada Corporate Intelligence, an ASA business intelligence partner. Armada's Flagship Brief hits several thousand executives three times a week and the group's work can be seen via numerous ASA Business Intelligence platforms, including Dr. Kuehl's popular Monthly Economic Update Webinar that he does with business partner Keith Prather. Reach him at [chris.kuehl@armadaci.com](mailto:chris.kuehl@armadaci.com). ■**

360

A study prepared for Ernst and Young that looked back at almost 10 years of uncertainty shows that more than \$360 billion in profits were lost due to global disruptions and uncertainties.



## Tariffs and their impact on the M&A market

By **Steve Rossi**,  
Vice President of Advocacy  
srossi@asa.net

Over the past few months, Washington has been focused on the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB) reconciliation package. In 2017, that reconciliation legislation dragged on until October before becoming law.

This time, it moved from proposal to the president's desk in just four months, an unheard-of pace by D.C. standards. Throughout the process, ASA played a key role, briefing members of Congress and their staff on our industry's positions across a wide range of issues to ensure our voice was heard.

ASA Advocacy has helped to deliver beneficial results to members in OB BB. Congress permanently preserved the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, locking in a 21 percent corporate rate — and making the Section 199A pass-through deduction for S corporations permanent.

ASA, with its S Corporation coalition partners, helped to safeguard 2.6 million jobs, \$161 billion in wages, and \$325 billion in economic output, according to a national EY study.

An increase in the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap while closing the pass-through entity-level workaround and enhancing the Section 199A deduction for qualifying businesses were



Companies can now immediately deduct 100 percent of the cost of qualifying machinery, equipment, and improvements placed in service after Jan. 19, 2025, thanks to the reinstatement of permanent bonus depreciation. Shutterstock Photos.

included. On the estate-tax front, permanent relief was won by raising and indexing the unified estate, gift, and GST exemptions to \$15 million per individual and \$30 million per couple, eliminating any looming fiscal cliff for multigenerational, family-owned businesses.

Companies can now immediately deduct 100 percent of the cost of qualifying machinery, equipment, and improvements placed in service after Jan. 19, 2025, thanks to the reinstatement of

permanent bonus depreciation. We also helped to safeguard LIFO for roughly half of ASA members who rely on this inventory accounting method.

At the start of the year, we engaged senior policymakers — from the White House to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader — to make our industry’s voice heard in Washington. Those conversations have already delivered results: stronger dialogues with key House and Senate committees and closer collaboration on legislation that aligns with ASA’s priorities, that include the Healthy H2O Act, Workforce Investment reauthorization, and newly introduced legislation.

One development is our collaboration with Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-NY) on the newly introduced Energy Choice Act. That bill aims to prevent states from restricting or banning specific energy sources, to ensure consumer choice in the marketplace. In addition, we continue to broaden our impact by teaming up with other aligned associations and coalitions in D.C.

In May, I had the honor of speaking at the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling-Contractors-National Association legislative conference, then returned to Capitol Hill in late June as part of the High-Performance Buildings Coalition – a partnership of more than 30 national building-trade organizations.

Earlier this year, my peers elected me to the coalition’s leadership team, further cementing ASA’s role in shaping federal policy. These strategic relationships have significantly amplified our advocacy efforts. We have also stepped-up support on issues vital to PVF members, including petroleum leasing, pipeline infrastructure, and data-center development.



At the start of the year, ASA engaged senior policymakers — from the White House to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader — to make our industry’s voice heard in Washington.

### Tariff details

On the trade and tariff front, the last few months have caused some uncertainty in the marketplace. However, by late July, some trade deals started to take shape — ahead of the President’s early August deadline. A quick deal with China on rare earth materials

started to see a rollout of deals with major trade partners, including the United Kingdom, Japan, and the European Union.

While many of the details are yet to be worked out, the general framework is in place with the UK generally seeing a 10% tariff on exports to the US, the European Union realizing a 15% tariff, along with major commitments for investment in the United States, the purchase of American energy, and agreeing to buy American military equipment.

Meanwhile, Indonesia struck a framework allowing 99 percent of US exports to enter tariff-free, while imposing a 19 percent levy on Indonesian imports, except for goods not produced domestically. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and his Chinese counterparts have been meeting in Sweden, and an extension of the tariff truce beyond Aug. 12 appeared likely as of this writing.

Canada negotiations remain on hold pending Prime Minister Mark Carney’s demand for better terms, and talks with Brazil and India are ongoing, with formal frameworks expected in September. This whirlwind of renegotiation, an unprecedented push to overhaul long-standing trade relationships within months, should yield greater clarity by the end of 2025 as the Secretaries of Treasury and Commerce, the U.S. Trade Representative, and their teams continue to hash out details.

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**“ASA’s Advocacy office also has stepped-up support on issues vital to PVF members, including petroleum leasing, pipeline infrastructure, and data-center development.”**

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### ASA PAC update

Finally, thanks to robust volunteer leadership, ASA PAC celebrated a banner year in 2024, with 31 of our 35 endorsed federal candidates winning election. The 2023–24 cycle also saw us raise more in contributions than at any time in the last 25 years, a clear sign of growing momentum.

That momentum shows no sign of slowing, as June marked our best fundraising month ever with \$11,350 raised, and our balance stood just shy of \$60,000 as of June 30. With a goal of \$100,000 by the end of 2026, ASA PAC is well on track for even greater impact. ■

25

The 2023–24 election cycle saw the ASA PAC raise more in contributions than at any time in the last 25 years, a clear sign of growing momentum.

## ASA-U course uplift: A fresh look at trusted PHCP-PVF industry education.

By **Taylor Albano**  
Vice President Education and Training  
talbano@asa.net

At the heart of the ASA Education Foundation's mission lies a steadfast commitment: to ensure our industry's workforce is the best trained, most professional, and most productive in the supply chain.

In support of that mission — and in alignment with the ASA Workforce Development Council's strategic goals — the ASA Education Foundation is thrilled to announce a comprehensive uplift of ASA University's core curriculum in 2025.

This transformation isn't just a refresh — it's a reinvention designed to meet the evolving needs of the modern learner, support member companies' workforce development, and boost the visibility and impact of ASA's talent management tools.

### Serving the busy modern learner

ASA University has long been the gold standard for industry training. In 2025, we're elevating that standard by delivering content that today's learners find relevant, flexible, and engaging. Bite-sized lessons give ultimate flexibility for learners, even on the go, and facilitate training within the flow of work.

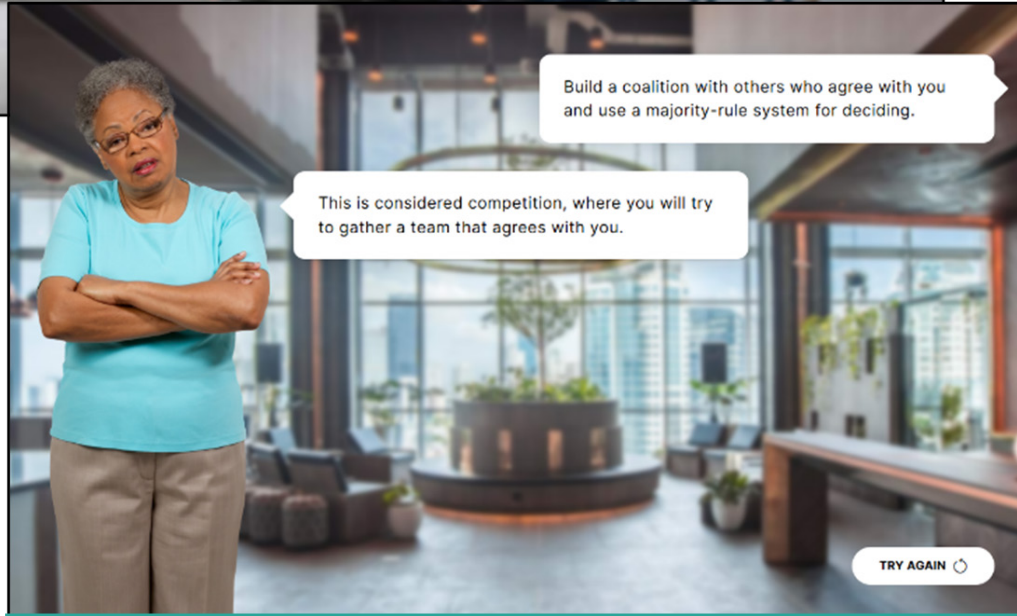
The redesigned ASA-U curriculum helps us reach and attract the next generation of professionals by presenting material in ways that reflect how they consume information — on-demand, mobile-ready, and focused on real-life application.

"The ASA Education Foundation's goal is to provide ever-evolving educational resources that meet the changing needs of our industry," ASA Vice President of Education and Training **Taylor Albano** said. "Our members needed more rapidly-consumable, engaging, and effective training, and we've taken that charge seriously. The ASA-U course uplift gives a new experience to the trusted content members already count on."

## Building Trust with Clients

Step into the shoes of a showroom sales consultant and help Sarah find the faucet she needs. Click "Continue" to begin.

CONTINUE



The ASA Education Foundation is undergoing a comprehensive uplift of ASA University's core curriculum this year.

## New features engage learners

Gone are the days of long-winded slide decks and dull voiceovers — ASA-U's new approach engages the learner, offering many new ways for the learner to interact with the content by exploration.

A slick, redesigned interface brings our content into a modernized look and feel for an easy-to-use and future-ready approach. Mini-activities throughout the course keep the learner engaged, asking them to apply knowledge in a variety of ways — from flash cards to choice-based scenarios. Live-action video at key knowledge checkpoints keeps learners engaged and interested.

Designed in a mobile-ready format, learners can now easily and quickly access training content from any device — whether it's a quick refresher on the warehouse floor using their mobile device or a training session at a desktop computer.

In addition to the rich and engaging features added to our courses, we've also taken into consideration the diversity of learning styles within our member companies and designed this uplift with those goals in mind.


Each module now contains a variety of learning styles available to help meet learners where they're at. Self-paced learning

Course Summary

## Introduction to Steel, Stainless Steel, Iron Pipe, and Fittings

This document provides an overview of the key concepts related to steel, stainless steel, iron, pipe, and fittings. Use this application of this course.

Lesson	Key Concepts
Classifications of Steel Pipe	Steel pipe • size • material • application
Steel Pipe Ends and Fittings	Steel pipe For threaded gradual of available transition Pipe connections • size



**SCAVENGER HUNT**  
Find the items and/or answers to the questions below about pipe and tube at your company

LOCATE AT YOUR COMPANY		NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Location in warehouse or yard where pipe and tube are stored	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Types of metal and plastic pipe sold by your company	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Different sizes of pipe and tube your company offers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Various shapes of tube your company sells. Bonus to determine the types of applications each is used for!	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special markings stamped into the pipe (more on this in a future pipe course!)	

ASK YOUR SUPERVISOR		NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your company stock pipe for high pressure applications? What kind?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your company stock pipe or tube for low pressure or residential plumbing applications? What kind?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your company machine pipe ends to	

ASA University created downloadable real-life “scavenger hunts” that get trainees up and out of their chair to discover more about how their learning connects with their day-to-day role. Photos courtesy of ASA Education Foundation.

combined with live-action video is interwoven throughout the course for visual learners, as well as several audiovisual checkpoints to assist more auditory learners. Downloadable lesson summaries give tactile learners a “take home” training tool for easy reference on the job or at their workstation.

In addition, select courses are available in Spanish. Using feedback from our members, a small selection of courses will be translated into Spanish-language to further promote accessibility for our members.

### Connecting Learning to Real-Life

One key area of need for members was a way to connect learning happening in ASA-U to the realities, or “hands on” part of the business. In response, ASA University created downloadable real-life “scavenger hunts” that get trainees up and out of their chair to discover more about how their learning connects with their day-to-day role. Trainees learning about pipe, valves and fittings are encouraged to engage with their worksite, their supervisor, and their products to gain deeper understanding of their role.

In addition, several new “choice-based scenarios” are included with the course content, which asks the learner to connect the dots in a storytelling scenario. This provides a safe and risk-free space for learners to experiment, try new approaches, and put their learning into action.

### It's a good time to reconnect!

This uplift offers ASA members a timely opportunity to re-engage with ASA-U and explore new ways to integrate its resources into their company’s training strategy. By improving access, flexibility, and user experience, the enhanced platform amplifies the value of ASA’s broader workforce development offerings and encourages deeper engagement from companies of all sizes.

New and returning users will discover that ASA-U is not only a source of trusted industry knowledge but also a strategic asset for talent development and team performance.

If it’s been a while since you explored ASA-U, we encourage you to take another look. With the 2025 uplift, we’ve combined trusted industry education with modern delivery to support your company’s growth — and help you develop a future-ready workforce.

Together, we’re building stronger teams, growing careers, and elevating the PHCP/PVF industry. 🎯

#### COURSES AVAILABLE NOW:

- ➡ Overview of Wholesale Distribution (also available in Spanish)
- ➡ Introduction to the PHCP/Industrial PVF Industry (also available in Spanish)
- ➡ Introduction to Pipes, Valves, and Fittings
- ➡ Introduction to Copper Tube, Plastic Pipe, and Fittings
- ➡ Essentials of How Wholesaler-Distributors Make Money
- ➡ Essentials of Profitable Wholesale Distribution
- ➡ Essentials of Superb Service in Wholesale Distribution
- ➡ Developing Positive Relationships at Work
- ➡ Creating a Respectful Workplace
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