



Strategy Equals Success

Sharing Goals Builds Strength in Partnership.

In a Harvard Business Review article, Michael Porter writes that competitive strategy is "about being different." He adds, "It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value." In short, Porter argued that competitive strategy is about creating a unique position, about differentiating yourself in the eyes of the customer, and finally about adding value through a mix of activities that differ from those used by competitors.

One such ISP competitive strategy is the visionary approach used in developing our Strategic Partners. We are often asked, "Do you use subcontractors?" Our Strategic Partners are not "subcontractors".

Webster's Dictionary of Law defines a subcontractor as an individual or business that contracts to perform part or all of the obligations of another's contract. In the business world, a subcontractor agreement is traditionally perceived as a short term action to perform an immediate need. Subcontractors are purposefully excluded and insulated from the operation of the contracting company. Subcontractors simply come in, do their part of the job and leave.

To align ourselves with the standard definition of a subcontractor would devalue how important our Strategic Partners are to our organization. Let's take a moment to break down the term Strategic Partner. **Strategic** is defined by Webster as, necessary to or important in the initiation, conduct, or completion of a strategic plan. Webster defines **partner** several ways, most commonly as one associated with another especially in an action. However, it's an obscure nautical definition of **partner** which seems to best visually demonstrate how ISP views our Strategic Partners. **Partner** is defined as a wooden framework used to strengthen a ship's deck.

If ISP is the ship, then it is our Strategic Partners who provide strength in our mission to serve our clients and complete our strategic plan of total customer satisfaction. How the role of Strategic Partner is defined is a direct result of ISP's mission to exceed our clients' expectations. The Strategic Partner model is part of ISP's visionary



approach to painting excellence. It is what makes us different and part of what adds value to our clients.

Strategic partnering implies a shared purpose. That purpose is to best serve our clients. ISP and its Strategic Partners share in achieving the goals of our clients, protecting their image and providing the highest quality services.

Strategic Partners take part in the long term plan of action to satisfy clients and create an earned relationship of trust and recommendation. That plan of action includes the painting expertise, craftsmanship and capacity to fully manage a jobsite. Many ISP Strategic Partners are family owned and operated businesses with generations of experience and tradition behind them. As a result, each partner carries a sense of ownership and pride that translates into the elevated level of quality that is incorporated into their work. **ISP Strategic Partners are proud owners of their businesses with a motivation to improve, grow and be a model of professionalism.** Each new partnership is cultivated for a long term relationship. As part of that cultivation, ISP integrates continuous training, support and business development tools into the partner relationship

Our Strategic Partners are an important part of the ISP family and share our dedication to meeting exacting standards of quality and integrity. ISP is the direct contact for the client, implementing all controls for project management and constructing the bid for every project. Together, ISP and the Strategic Partners are able to provide focused attention to every client.

Each February, ISP brings together top Strategic Partners to learn about and train on new products, share best practices and exchange ideas with each ISP department. Our partners contribute to marketing, sales, project management, C-Drive development and partner development by offering their experience, craftsmanship and expertise. **The ISP Annual Conference sets the stage for new growth and change in the upcoming year.** ISP uses the meeting to evaluate the evolving industry and the changing needs of our clients.

In truth, it is the people of our organization who differentiate us from our competitors. ISP derives its strength from the distinctive structure of relationships between its employees, its customers and its Strategic Partners. The integrity of our Strategic Partners and their dedication and trust in ISP Painting, Inc. is a critical cornerstone to our success.