



Viachem pushes specialty, fine chemical distribution

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SAN FRANCISCO (ICIS news 18 February 2010)--US-based **Viachem** said on Thursday it is making a bid for a uniquely competitive position in the specialty and fine chemical distribution arena.

"There's a new model emerging to partner with and support the specialty and fine chemical industries, and this has been happening in the last seven to eight years. It started back in the late 1990's and has since begun to pick up momentum," Mike Efting, president of Viachem, said at InformexUSA.

Many of the specialty chemical and fine chemical producers attending InformexUSA this week have historically had problems marketing their products to smaller (i.e., tier 2 and tier 3 size) customers. Viachem, which started up in 2006, emerged to fill that need, according to Efting.

"There haven't been good channels to market to these tier 2 and tier 3 customers, and that is starting to change," Efting continued. "The fine chemical groups of larger chemical companies such as Dow Chemical or BASF were frustrated with channels-to-market that were available to them because they have longer sales cycles and more complex sales. It is a business where a chemist or biologist is needed to sell the product."

All of Viachem's sales people are chemists, Efting said. "The people we talk to are traditionally the chemists or the R&D persons within the company who's looking to solve a particular problem using a specific solution. Our sales people understand the technology and the chemistry enough to help them solve their issues," Efting said.

Viachem's newer business model focuses on products where it can add value to the end-use customer and to the producer through formulation knowledge, Efting said. Traditional channels-to-market typically focus on products where value is added through logistics and warehousing.

"We help specialty chemical producers in Europe, for example, identify what the market is in the US, or North America, and help them determine what is the best way to communicate with and work with potential customers to sell their products in those markets," said Efting.

Viachem also offers customer resource management (CRM) technology, which provides its clients with the means to view all activities taking place for their products in real-time. The technology offers an online graphic interface, or dashboard, that gives producers a quick view in 15 minutes of product activities, such as where in the sale cycle each buyer of that product is.