This semester (academic school year), the IPD client/corporate sponsor is Copco. Copco is a wholly owned Division of Wilton Industries, Incorporated and was originally founded by Sam Farber (of OXO Good Grips fame) prior to being sold to Wilton Industries. Wilton Industries, Inc. is a privately owned corporation. Wilton has several other divisions in addition to Copco. Copco/Wilton is a major player in the domestic housewares industry. Their products may be found at mass merchants (aka Big Box), department stores, as well as at a variety of specialty retailers.

As seeing Copco is our both this year’s client and patron, it is only appropriate that all students in the class begin to familiarize themselves with the company, its brand, history, product lines, position in the marketplace, and channels of distribution.

Go to the company web site, www.wilton.com, and take some time to get a good sense of how the company presents itself to the public. Next, visit various types of retail outlets that represent each different channel of distribution and see the products first hand (Field Research). Inspect the product samples closely for materials, color palettes, manufacturing processes, packaging, point of purchase display (if applicable), retail price points, sale price points, location within the store (shelf or end cap), etc. Also take note of competitive products within these same venues. Keep an eye out in the Sunday newspaper advertising sections to see if Copco is offering any ‘specials’ through its retail partners.

Immerse yourself into the housewares industry, the product categories, the company, and its competition. At the end of this exercise, each student should have a good understanding of Copco and the industry, as well as be familiar enough to be able to discuss any of the aspects mentioned above in class. This preliminary background and field research will help each student acquire a general understanding (big picture overview) and basic sensibilities of Copco.

**Project Requirements**

1. Visit and explore the Copco/Wilton company web site.

2. Field Research: On site store visits to at least one store within each channel of distribution (eg. mass merchant/big box - Target; department store - Kohl’s; specialty retailer - Bed, Bath & Beyond). Close examination of Copco/Wilton products and review of the competition.

**Due Date**

Tuesday, August 31, 2004