

INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

ALAN DREEBEN

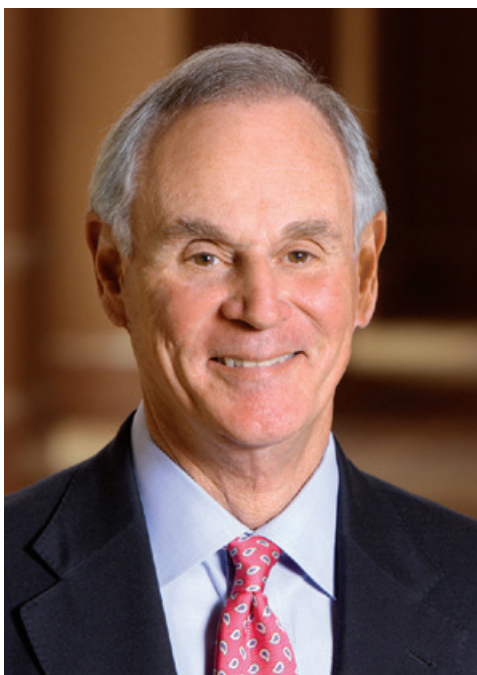
Partner, Republic National Distributing Co.

Alan Dreeben has been part of the drinks industry's second tier for more than half a century, becoming one of the great pioneers in establishing wine as part of the American lifestyle. If that was the calling of a remarkable career, he certainly had an auspicious start—joining a leadership training program at E. & J. Gallo Winery in 1966 and reporting directly to the legendary Ernest Gallo. He then moved to Block Distributing in San Antonio, Texas, which would eventually become part of the merger that formed Republic National Distributing Co. (RNDC). Over the years, Dreeben burnished his executive credentials and helped establish the leadership role for RNDC that the company enjoys today.

Block merged with Republic Beverage in 2005 and Dreeben, who was then serving as Block's executive vice president, became a co-vice chairman of the newly named Republic Beverage Co. Two years later, Republic joined forces with Atlanta-based National Distributing Co. to create RNDC. Since then, the company has continued to expand, posting nearly \$12 billion in revenue last year, behind only Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits at \$19 billion.

With Dreeben in a key leadership role, RNDC has maintained progress over the years through a constant reevaluation of strategy, technology, and core values. In a memorable speech at the 2012 Impact Marketing Seminar, Dreeben laid out the foundations of the company's success—including a relentless effort to strengthen partnerships with suppliers, retailers, and consumers; training for the RNDC workforce; and placing an ever-greater emphasis on marketing and not just selling. "Consumer data helps make products more relevant in a market comprised of different cultures and ethnicities," he noted, adding that it was all part of the evolution from "pull" to "push" marketing strategies—with technology playing a major role in the warehouse and out in the field in servicing retail customers.

Using those bedrock principles and strategies, RNDC has been on a sustained growth trajectory. Last year, it added ten western states and more than \$3 billion in revenues through



Alan Dreeben's leadership has helped shape Republic National Distributing Co. into the No.-2 wholesaler in the U.S. since its formation in 2007.

its new joint venture with the Underwood family's Young's Holdings. That deal brought RNDC's total footprint to 32 states. Meanwhile, the company has continued to invest in technology, notably with its eRNDC supplier portal, which provides online visibility into the status of orders and overall management of brands. All of RNDC's suppliers have now transitioned to the eRNDC portal, which has become a valuable tool during the Covid-19 crisis. At press time, over 80% of RNDC's retail customers were expected to have access to eRNDC—a major milestone in the company's digital transformation. In addition, RNDC has brought online distributor LibDib into the fold as a partner. At press time, LibDib was licensed to distribute in six states, with more expected to follow.

In addition to his role at RNDC, Dreeben sits on a number of corporate and community boards. A 1965

graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, he helped establish the 40 Acres Scholarship program at his alma mater's McCombs School of Business. His contributions to education also include service as foundation director and past regent and chairman of the Texas State University System, as well as membership on the executive committee of the University of Texas/Texas System Chancellor's Council. Outside of education, Dreeben is active in a wide range of business activities that include membership roles on the board of directors of Camber Energy, the advisory board of San Antonio Capital, and the executive committee of the Texas Business Leadership Council. On the charity front, he's on the executive committee of the United Way and has contributed to the American Cancer Society, Any Baby Can, the Hospice of San Antonio, Los Compadres, and the Golden Manor Home for the Aged, among many others. Within his field, he's also advisory director of the North American division of the Institute of Masters of Wine, as well as a member of the Wine Market Council's executive committee and the Wine Advisory Committee of the Texas Department of Agriculture.

David Fleming