



## Top 25 Exec Takes Top Kensington Post

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Samsung's loss is Kensington's gain. Chris Franey, who led a channel resurgence as a vice president at IT products giant Samsung and resigned suddenly last week, has resurfaced as president of the Computer Products Group of ACCO Brands, which markets a wide variety of computer accessories under the Kensington brand.

The appointment puts Franey, a 20-year-plus channel veteran and perennial CRN Top 25 Executive, at the helm of one of the most popular makers of computer accessories. ACCO Brands itself is one of the world's largest suppliers of office products with annual sales of nearly \$2 billion.

For the last two-and-a-half years, Franey was vice president of marketing and commercial sales at multibillion dollar conglomerate Samsung's Information Technology Division.

Franey, who is known in industry circles as a channel turnaround artist of sorts, laid the groundwork that allowed Samsung to deliver record market share in the intensely competitive and volatile display space. This came after he posted the same kind of impressive results at display maker ViewSonic before taking the Samsung job.

Kensington, which competes against players such as Belkin and Logitech, markets everything from mini battery packs and chargers for iPhones and iPods to a full line of keyboards and mice.

Franey's appointment sets up a battle of the new channel stars between Kensington and Belkin, which has just promoted Sean Williams to the newly created post of vice president of the Americas. Williams' appointment comes with the sudden departure of Gregg Prendergast, also a former Samsung executive, as Belkin's vice president of sales.

Prendergast joined Belkin in May of 2006 after handling sales and distribution for Samsung America's Information Technology Division.

Franey will be an executive officer of ACCO Brands and report to ACCO Brands Chairman and CEO Robert Keller.

In a prepared statement, Keller praised Franey as "a seasoned executive with a deep understanding of the global computer products industry."

Franey, who starts his new job on Thursday, succeeds Boris Elisman, who was named president, Americas, for ACCO Brands in October.

Bob Venero, the CEO of FutureTech, a VAR 500 solution provider, said he hopes Franey revamps the Kensington channel program and brings new incentives for solution providers.

"I hope he can bring a lot of program experience and back-end dollars and a non-commodity-based channel structure vs. what Kensington has today," Venero said. "Kensington needs volume, volume, volume. They have a lot of low-ticket items but there is a lot of margin between retail list and the cost price."

Venero said he is anxious to see what kind of program changes Franey makes at Kensington. One big plus, he said, is that Kensington is already a "strong channel player."