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Columbia Distributing took a minority stake in Hayden Beverage, linking two major Northwest wholesalers.

The deal closed Thursday on undisclosed terms, leaving the Idaho distributor independent under current leadership.

Monday, September 21, 2026



Columbia Distributing has completed its previously announced strategic partnership with Hayden Beverage, giving the Oregon and Washington distributor a minority stake in the Idaho company and linking two major wholesalers in the Pacific Northwest at a time of change in the beverage distribution business.

The companies said in a joint announcement that the deal closed Thursday. They did not disclose the financial terms. As part of the transaction, the Hayden family also took an indirect ownership interest in Columbia, a structure the companies said is meant to align the businesses for the long term while allowing Hayden to remain independent.

Under the agreement, Hayden will keep operating under its current leadership, name, licenses, systems and processes, according to the companies. They also said the transaction will not lead to layoffs, employee changes or shifts in day-to-day operations. Columbia President and Chief Executive Chris Steffanci said the partnership is intended to support a broader “total beverage” strategy in the region, while Hayden owner and chairman Dodds Hayden described it as a response to an industry transition that could create room for growth.

The deal ties together two distributors that already share some supplier relationships and serve overlapping beverage categories. Columbia, founded in 1935, said it has 3,200 employees and serves more than 24,000 retail customers across Oregon and Washington. The company said its current footprint covers nearly 170,000 square miles. Hayden, founded in 1970 and purchased by Dodds Hayden in 2006, said it serves customers throughout Idaho with a portfolio that includes wine, beer, cider, non-alcoholic drinks and other growing categories.

The partnership also fits into Columbia’s wider expansion plans in the Northwest. In addition to its established business in Oregon and Washington and its new investment in Idaho, the company said it is still pursuing an acquisition of related assets in Alaska. That Alaska deal has not yet closed. Columbia said that if the Alaska transaction is completed, it would add about 1,125 accounts and extend the company’s reach to more than 835,000 square miles.

That larger regional footprint could matter well beyond the two companies involved. In the beer, wine and spirits business, scale at the wholesale level can affect how brands reach stores, bars and restaurants. A stronger four-state platform could give suppliers broader access across Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington through aligned distribution relationships, while also giving retailers access to a wider range of products through one network. At the same time, any reshaping of the wholesaler landscape can change bargaining dynamics for suppliers and could influence which brands gain shelf space or distribution focus in local markets.

Neither company announced immediate changes to supplier contracts or retailer service as part of the closing. Still, the transaction reflects a broader push in the beverage sector toward multi-category distribution networks that can handle not only beer, but also wine, spirits, cider and non-alcoholic products. That model has become more important as consumer demand spreads across categories and distributors look for ways to build scale without fully combining operations.

Hayden said strategic partnerships have played a major role in its growth before, citing earlier alliances with Young’s Market Company and RNDC. The company said the arrangement with Columbia is different because it is built around a more local and regional approach. For Columbia, the investment adds a direct link to Idaho without folding Hayden into its own operating structure.

The companies framed that balance as one of the main purposes of the deal: gaining regional alignment while preserving local market relationships. That point is significant in beverage distribution, where sales execution often depends on state-by-state regulations, long-standing retailer ties and local knowledge of category demand. Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Alaska each have different market conditions, and distributors that can coordinate across those boundaries while keeping local operations in place may be better positioned to compete for supplier business.

The announcement did not say whether the partnership changes governance rights, board representation or future buyout options. It also did not include any regulatory concerns tied specifically to the minority investment. What the companies did make clear is that they see the transaction as part of a longer strategy to build a regional

wholesale platform around multiple beverage categories rather than a single segment.

For Hayden, that includes a business already built around separate divisions and specialized expertise across channels and product types. For Columbia, it extends a network that has historically centered on Oregon and Washington and now moves more firmly toward a Pacific Northwest structure with Idaho included and Alaska still pending. The result is a closer link between two distributors that together touch large parts of the regional market for beer, wine, cider, non-alcoholic drinks and other beverage categories sold through retailers across the Northwest.