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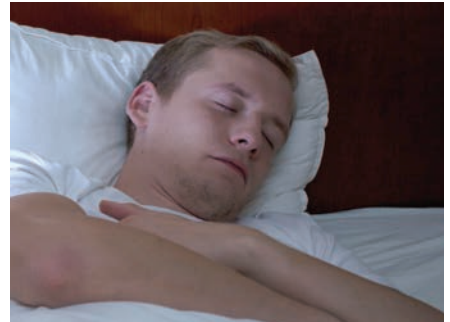
Capitalizing on the assets of **MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES**



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ERA HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

Phone: 312-419-1432

Fax: 312-419-1660

Email: info@era.org • URL: era.org

Chief Executive Officer:

Walter E. Tobin

wtobin@era.org

Editor:

Neda Simeonova

nsimeonova@era.org

Consulting Editor:

Tess Hill

thill@era.org

Advertising Manager:

Stephanie Tierney

stierney@era.org

Cover:

Katherine Green

In Bits

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SUMMER 2017

Capitalizing on the assets of **MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES**



Do you sleep with your phone under your pillow to be certain you don't miss a message? Congratulations, you are very likely to have been born after 1980. People watchers confirm that employees now suffer from "technology creep." The 25-50 year-olds also are developing the same bad habit, while those born before 1950 are saying, "What is this world coming to?" They will soon learn that they need to settle down and hold on because we have a new normal that has been created by the millennials and their smartphones. Welcome to the 24-hour workcycle.

Dad is quoting the price for adhesives while he waits for his oil change. Mom is checking her flight schedule on her phone as she packs lunch for two kids under eight, who are waiting to bound out the door for school. This marketing representative and her sales manager spouse have been married to each other for 10 years, and this is their normal. They share parenting and the desire to succeed in the 24-hour workcycle. It works because it is all they know. They never had a nine-to-five job with family life clearly separated from work. Yet, each craves balance and snatches at every little snippet they can find. They are millennials.

They are remarkably resilient and will shamelessly dump their kids at their parents' house to spend a few hours at a sports bar watching the "big game." Don't hit on them; they are just millennials. On the positive side, they are not bigots and will point out that personal differences are a strength. They love Mother Earth and find work that focuses on preserving the planet to be very appealing. They are tech savvy and when your screen freezes or turns green, they will fix it in a flash. On the painful side, although some of them grew up with wonderful parents, many more grew up with no parent in the home to socialize them. No one taught them that working from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. means you are actually expected to arrive on time and work all of those hours. However, they do not hate the workplace. As many as 80 percent state that coworkers are like a second family, and they expect to find employers who understand them.

1980s workforce

Supervisor as parent started about 1980, as the first generation of latchkey children entered the workplace. They were the first generation



About Nancye M. Combs, AEP, SPHR

Nancye Combs is a voice of authority on human resources and organizational development. She speaks, consults, writes and offers expert witness testimony on workplace issues. She is president and CEO of HR Enterprise, Inc., in Louisville, Ky., and spent 20 years as a corporate business executive before founding a consulting practice. She provides management advisory services to hundreds of executives in business, industry, education, and government in North America, South America, Europe and Asia. Nancye also is the retained consultant for the members of trade associations, such as Specialty Tools and Fasteners Distributors Association, one of America's largest trade associations, and works extensively with distributors and manufacturers worldwide. Nancy has been a featured speaker at the White House on programs with the President, the Vice President and members of the U.S. Cabinet. She was named one of the top women business owners in Louisville and received the Award of Professional Excellence from the Louisville Society for Human Resource Management, which awards a scholarship in her name.

Nancye can be reached at nancyecombs@aol.com, or at 502-896-0503.

of one-parent homes and mom (or sometimes dad) had no choice but to work. They learned conflict resolution on TV — "You hit me and I will hit your harder!" They were introduced to violence with video games where blowing up the enemy determined who wins. Their behavior bewildered their teachers, who lamented that they were "teachers, not counselors." They found their next adult authority figure at work with the title "supervisor," and the supervisor became the resource for the myriad of personal problems they brought to the workplace.

Because it was overwhelming to supervisors and managers, the company looked for an outside resource and the concept of employee assistant programs (EAP) was born. EAP on contract, as a resource to help employees address problems of anger, addiction, financial crisis and marriage problems, is now common in the workplace. It was no surprise to those who watch changing behaviors in the workplace

(continued on next page)

COVER STORY: Millennial employees

(continued from previous page)

to see the rise in workplace violence during the 1980s, including the new horrifying actions by emotionally deranged employees labeled, “going postal.” Employers were stunned to learn that workplace homicide rose to the third leading cause of death on the job. The millennials are the offspring of this generation!

Societal changes, along with changes in the economy, created new workplace realities. The backbone of the workforce, the baby boomers, ramped up for retirement, began their exit and

We must accept the reality, however, that by 2020, 80 percent of millennials will be in the workforce and it will be hard to find a boomer, except in an executive positions. This creates a sense of urgency for employers who depend on them as their future workforce.

were replaced by millennials. At the end of the recession, many boomers were back at work, at least part time. We must accept the reality, however, that by 2020, 80 percent of millennials will be in the workforce and it will be hard to find a boomer, except in an executive positions. This creates a sense of urgency for employers who depend on them as their future workforce. What will it take to attract them, to engage and to retain them as part of the succession plan of the business?

Money

It should be no surprise that money is at the top of their list. There is an abundance of workforce research by credible entities, such as World@Work, Gallup and the Society for Human Resource Management, that indicates that 70 percent of millennials say that growth in wages is essential to attract and keep them. When there is no opportunity for promotion, then it is essential that they have the opportunity to enrich their jobs and learn new skills, such as project management and strategic leadership. Along with growth is the desire to make certain they have access to technology advancement. None will be willing to work with technology that is grossly out of date. The tech generation started school with a computer, and they have been through many technology improvement generations since then.

Work-life balance

Work-life balance has a prominent place on the TOP FIVE list of what millennials seek to remain engaged in their work. Recently, a large group of employees went on strike in the distilling industry. Their grievance was overtime! They were just tired of working overtime. This event triggered the importance of work-life balance for another generation — the baby boomers. The Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor Poll found there is only a 6 percent difference in how millennials and boomers feel about quality of life. Money and benefits were not their grievance; lack of life quality became more important to most, as they live for now and are living longer.

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COVER STORY, CON'T

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Summer 2017 | The Representative



Tim Doran, CPMR
President
Doran Associates

With so many ERA members, it is not easy to get to know every rep, manufacturer and distributor in the business. "Someone You Should Know" is The Representor department that gives readers the chance to learn about fellow ERA members, including how their time is spent both in and out of the office.

Meet Tim Doran, CPMR, president of Doran Associates, a second-generation, family-owned and operated company located in Beaverton, Ore.

The Representor asked Tim a few questions about his time in the rep business and his experiences with ERA. Here is what he had to say.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I am a second-generation owner of the Northwest rep firm Doran Associates, founded by my parents Bern and Fran in 1968, and managed until recently by my brother Bill who retired in 2016. I joined the family business in 1985 after graduating from Portland State University with a B.S. in Business Administration. My wife Julie and I met in marketing class, and we recently celebrated 32 years of marriage. We have two beautiful daughters. Christine is 26 and Michelle is 25.

What are some things you enjoy outside of the workplace?

I enjoy hiking, mountain biking and kayaking, primarily in the Oregon Cascades mountain range. We also often find ourselves working on our vacation home in Central Oregon. I am a fan of the Trailblazers, Seahawks and the football team of Oregon State University, the school my daughters attended.

How long have you been an ERA member and how long in the rep business?

My parents joined ERA in 1969, and my father was with a Chicago member rep firm even prior to that. I have been a rep providing electronic component solutions to OEMs in the Pacific Northwest for 32 years. I was recently honored to be elected vice president of the ERA Pacific Northwest Chapter.

How did you become interested in being a rep in the electronics industry?

Honestly, I did not plan to follow in my parents' footsteps. Business schools often focus on preparing you for big business. Also, I had grown up seeing my folks struggle to get the rep firm off the ground. I later realized that because they were the entrepreneurs, I was fortunate enough to be able to join a thriving family business. I now feel a strong obligation to continue their legacy.

What have you found to be most rewarding about the rep business?

I like the independence and the ability to use creativity. I thoroughly enjoy helping customers find solutions, whether or not it is on our line card. I always want them to be glad they came to us with their requirement. I enjoy watching the evolution of customers' ideas into a real product, and being a part of their design can be very exciting.

Briefly describe your rep firm.

We are a five-person sales team with offices in

Portland and Seattle. We focus on helping OEM engineers with their electromechanical component design requirements. We excel in customized, modified and value-added solutions. Each of our salespeople has attained either CPMR or CSP certification, and we all enjoy our strong and long-term relationships with our customers, distributor partners and principals. We have a fantastic team!

What recent innovations, best practices and/or changes has your company made?

As catalogs become obsolete, we now carry Web-connected tablets so we can link to our principals' websites while with customers, bringing up spec sheets, checking stock, pricing, etc. We also connect live with our CRM while in the field via our mobile phones or tablets, and often conference in applications engineers so we can answer customers' questions immediately. We have come a long way since I joined the industry when we used three-part carbon paper memos to mail questions to our principals.

What have you learned and/or what contacts have you made through ERA that have had the greatest positive impacts on you and/or your business?

We have learned a great deal from the sessions at the ERA conferences, the regular teleforums, the articles in *The Representor* and the Quick Connections newsletter. We have used ERA's legal advisors over the years, and again recently with our transition into ownership. We have also adopted ideas from other members. I have a network of ERA member reps throughout the country whom I can contact for advice or discussion on specific issues. There is a lot of value from a membership in the ERA.

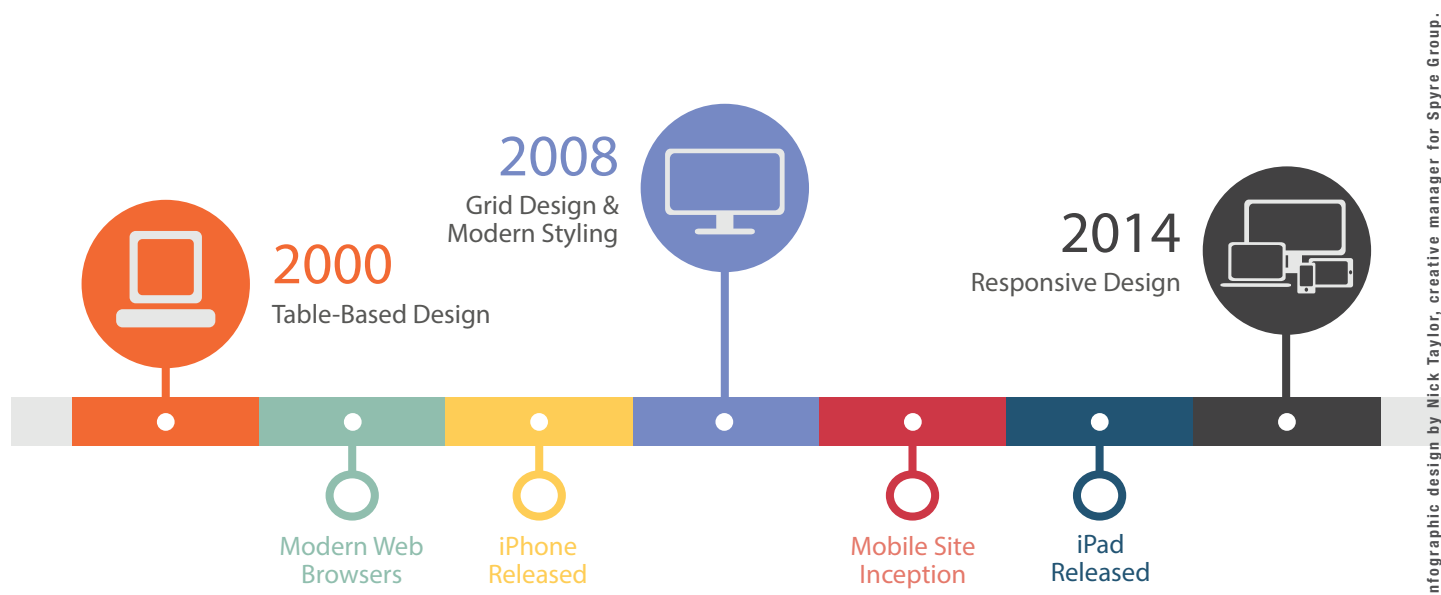
Are you active on social media? Do you follow ERA? Have ERA updates via social media been helpful to you?

I do follow ERA on LinkedIn and always find valuable information in the posts. We are increasing the use of social media as a marketing tool. We have implemented some of the LinkedIn tips learned during Wayne Breitbarth's wonderful session at the 2017 ERA Conference, and one of our team members is writing a blog highlighting how our principals have helped customers.

What is one interesting fact that people may not know about you?

I play the guitar for relaxation and was once in a garage band, and yes, I can play Stairway.

Finding the value in a website



A timeline showing show key changes in website design from 2000 to 2014.

Professional sales firms presumably view websites strictly on the expense side of the ledger, as they can be a pain to keep current and they don't directly help sell product. Why would a company even want one? The struggle with justifying manufacturers' representative websites lies within finding the value of the intangible returns or opportunities the site provides. Websites for this industry are primarily used to present the brand and professional image of the company, with some information on lines, product types and company contact details. They probably aren't going to directly sell a product, but they do sell the company. The targeted audiences that have been typically seen for rep firm websites are prospective manufacturers and customers seeking contact information.

What is the value of finding the right manufacturer or product line? This question does not lend itself to a simple answer, as it could be years before it is possible to truly quantify. If the primary purpose of a website is to attract new manufacturers and product lines, the investment and design should focus on that goal — ultimately creating value that will exceed the investment.

Major Web changes since 2007

The past decade has brought two significant advancements in how browsers display websites, which has outdated those developed prior to these

changes. If looking to point fingers at why many websites have become outdated, the culprit is the iPhone. The release in 2007 was the catalyst for the creation of mobile browsers and advancement in how websites are displayed. Fortunately, technology and the flexibility of current browsers do not have a foreseeable near-term major advancement to outdate websites built with modern coding. Websites built on mobile responsive frameworks should be compatible for at least five to 10 years.

The updates in how browsers read code and the capability of the content management platforms have led to one very significant benefit to businesses — the cost for websites has decreased significantly. Site development used to range from \$4,000 to \$10,000, but it can now be available for less than \$50 per month.

Prior to the availability of mobile responsive design, companies needed to develop two versions of each website for mobile and desktop viewing. Responsive design lies within the code to resize and reorganize the content, based on the device screen size. For instance, an area that has three horizontal columns on a laptop will automatically reshape and stack those columns vertically to fit a phone.

In a recent analysis of rep firm website traffic we conducted, an average of 19 percent of viewers were accessing through a mobile device.

Going responsive

Among Web developers, it is assumed that all new sites will be created in a mobile responsive framework, but when looking to build or redevelop a website, there are a few questions to ask yourself, beyond “What’s the price?”

- 1) How much time do you/your team want to dedicate to write and manage the text, find images, etc.?
- 2) How frequently will updates be needed with changes in manufacturers or team?
- 3) What is the primary audience and purpose of the site — manufacturers, distributors, OEMs and clients?

All the other “add-ons” typically offered with Web development projects will be difficult to justify the spend, including: search engine optimization, pay-per-click and content marketing. The target audience driven to a rep firm website is presumably limited. Fifty-one percent of the traffic from rep firm websites we recently analyzed was not through search engines, meaning the majority of traffic comes from someone that has been contacted previously, already has some company information, or entered the website from a link on a referring website. With nearly one-fifth of this viewership using mobile devices, the primary source may be linking to the site from a received email.

You are always advertising your website

Often overlooked, every time you send an email or display your email address on a line card, you are promoting your company website. Clients and contacts may only go to your website if they need contact information or to do a quick screening of the company, but the invitation to visit is very visible. How often do you pull up a prospective client’s website for a pre-meeting screening?

Choosing a platform

Web developers are a dime a dozen, from media design agencies to family friends, and the options to host and manage are equally as extensive. Each platform has a purpose and fits certain users, but unfortunately, most are not transferrable to other platforms.

Open source | WordPress, Joomla, etc.

These are great tools to build and maintain company websites that carry only minor hosting costs. The one knock on these platforms is they periodically update to a new version, which leaves users susceptible in two areas: Updating the platform can require changes to the code to display the website, and not updating can lead to hacking vulnerability from the deprecated platform.

DIY | Wix, SquareSpace

The do-it-yourself platforms have come great lengths in the past few years. They are preferred for companies looking to get started with minimal costs or to manage themselves without learning HTML code. The cons of using these platforms are they can look generic and customizations are limited.

Paid content management platforms

There are additional platforms requiring monthly fees that offer the capacity to fully customize the front-end and administration panels for websites. These often come with higher hosting costs, but websites are not susceptible to issues with the platforms like open source or limitations in customizations.

Finding the value

The value of a website is always going to be contingent upon return on investment versus price. This industry naturally poses a challenge to quantifying the return, especially because sales reps operate with very quantifiable and tangible elements such as sales, opportunities and commissions. Every organization should weigh the value of redeveloping or launching a website with the cost, considering the time and expense to maintain an up-to-date site, as there are many options to keep up with the growing use of mobile devices. Websites remain a modern necessity for all businesses. They can bring great value to every sales organization, but it is up to each company to quantify the intangible value of the opportunities it may provide.



Patrick Knoelke

Patrick Knoelke is managing director and founder of Spyre Group, a sales force focused design and technology firm. Patrick leads his team in providing rep firms and manufacturers with Web, digital, print and cloud collaboration solutions.

Spyre Group is an ERA member service provider. For more information about Spyre Group, visit spyregroup.com/rep.

Patrick can be reached at pknoelke@spyregroup.com, or at 913-499-6014.

ARE YOU A REP OF THE FUTURE?

You have to believe it to see it!

by Liz Beerman



Designed by Freepik

What does the future look like? Whatever the answer, it is in front of you — ready or not!

What does “being ready” mean? Anyone can believe it, and scurry to get ready once IT arrives and they can see it. Consider that “being ready” means believing in your ability to craft a future that stands every chance of being the way you want it to be. Believe it to see it.

So, are you ready ... is your firm ready to BE the rep of the future?

Both the Electronics Representatives Association (ERA) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association (NEMRA), among others, recently crafted surveys, interviews, reports and white papers that serve as the baseline for the question, “What is the rep of the future?” Unfortunately, many of these suggestions, as valid as they are, are a continual remix and reblending of once tried and true, but now questioned tactics. So, who is the rep of the future? YOU ARE.

The rep of the future shifts, focuses and creates a versatile and value-driven role as a specialized

solution provider. We are not talking about a complete reconstruction or reinvention of yourself or your firm. We bet you are already using solution positioning and selling with some manufacturers, partners and customers. Now is the time to take it up a level.

Looking into the future, what do you believe will be the biggest challenge you face? Is it digital sales and business capabilities; specialization: technology, product and application; or multi-generational issues?

Digital sales and business capabilities mean:

- A fully responsive website. This is your digital footprint that allows customers to see who you are and how you are responding to market needs.
- Fully responsive technology sales tools that are mobile ready. This includes CRM, marketing, line card, competitive information and analysis, territory information, white papers and case studies.
- Active conversation stream with current customers, prospects and referrals.

- Data science to drive sales (see www.buzzboard.com).

Specialization: technology, product and application mean:

- Times, technology and people are changing daily. You can't afford to stay put!
- Represent products and processes that customers will need first and fast when they are in trouble.
- Make it easy for customers to contact you first and fast when they are knee-deep in crisis. Move beyond phone and email. Be known for your dependable crisis management.

Multi-generational issues mean:

Hire right and develop deliberately. By now, you have read all kinds of articles and listened to a constant barrage about the difficulties of attracting and hiring younger generations. We bet you have stories of your own. However, are you deliberately doing the following?

- Sell well, leave well. Have your departing boomers mentor younger employees. Grab and transfer that intellectual property your retirees spent years accruing.
- SWOT your sales teams. Have young and experienced salespeople call on your buyers. You know what happens when experienced salespeople call on experienced buyers, and you know the challenge of young salespeople calling on those same buyers. Show your entire sales team what to do when they are in unfamiliar multi-generational situations.
- Maximize technical focus, bottom line profitability knowledge, communication expertise and goal-oriented vision in your sales team. These are the values specialized sellers deliver.
- NOW, develop deliberately. Provide opportunities for your team to acquire the skills they need. Create collaborative opportunities to share the information and grow sales.

How do YOU BELIEVE reps will sell in the future? Here are three insights that may help answer this question.

1. New game, new rules — differentiate;
2. Technology above relationships; and
3. Specialized system/solution sellers.

New game, new rules — differentiate

Do you prefer chess or poker? Are you a strategist, anticipating two or three moves ahead of where you are now, or do you play your cards close to the vest? Regardless of how you choose to play in the future, the only way you can fully control your business is by “owning” the rules. Differentiate yourself by identifying how you

bring the greatest value to your customers; then prove it with every interaction.

Technology above relationships

None of us wants to believe that key relationships will take a backseat to technology and not be as valuable in the future as they are today. Regardless of which side of the fence you stand on, know that everyone has become an instant information addict.

- Collect, sort, quantify, measure and analyze information. Use the analysis to bring value to your customers. Offer them trends and insight into what is in the R&D pipeline and competitive info.
- Use new and valuable resources to continually up your game.
- Lastly, be sure to read “Smartcuts: How Hackers, Innovators, and Icons Accelerate Success” by Shane Snow.

Specialized system/solution sellers

- Stronger reps get stronger. Few barriers-to-entry exist for an energetic new rep. Market research shows that a specialized system/solution seller will thrive.
- Specialized reps do more than promote application opportunities for their synergistic products. Use every available tool to create demand and make it easy for your customers to implement it. Provide analysis to support the new solution.
- Move beyond your current purchasing role contacts. Find the engineer, contractor, owner or end-user to frame the opportunity; provide the specifications; and open the platform for your specialty and your ability to provide and deliver.
- Provide more than what your customers can find online with a simple search.

Unless you have a crystal ball, becoming a successful rep of the future requires hard work, deliberate action, strategy and dedication to your profession. We are eager to see how you use the suggestions mentioned in this article. Regardless of what you see as your biggest challenge, or how you define your key differentiators, there is no question that the rep of the future will respond to the market as a specialized solution provider. Believe it to see it ... and BE it!

The rep of the future shifts, focuses and creates a versatile and value-driven role as a specialized solution provider.



Liz Beerman

Liz Beerman is executive director of MRERF/IPA – Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Research Foundation.

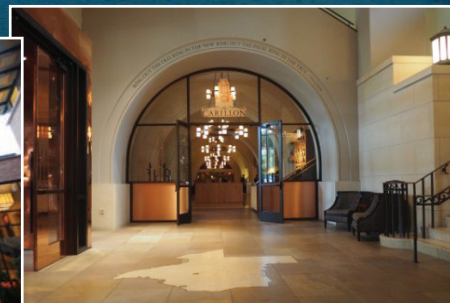
Liz's background includes extensive terms as director of operations for CQG, Inc., corporate marketing manager for Arrow Electronics and global training in consultative sales and marketing, for Hewlett-Packard. A graduate in psychology and education from California State University in Los Angeles, she received her Masters Degree at the University of Northern Colorado.

You can call Liz Beerman at 303-463-1801 or email her at liz@mrerf.org.



If it's February, it's time for ERA's 49th Management and Marketing Conference!

**Save the Dates:
Feb. 25-27, 2018 ...**



... for ERA's return to the AT&T Center in Austin, Texas.

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For information on ERA's 2018 Conference, go to era.org.

EDS 2017 — Were you there?

So ... three weeks after EDS (at the time this column was written) and I find myself STILL trying to get caught up on my day-to-day meetings and emails. I am still following up on numerous action items from meetings I attended and discussions with old and new friends at EDS.

But isn't this what EDS is all about? It's about holding meetings and developing action items to remain on track, or get back on track, with your manufacturer, rep or distributor partner to ensure that you are aligned to the common goals and business plans. A week's worth of meetings, dinners and golf tournaments SHOULD result in a treasure-trove of NEW and EXCITING plans. All these existing and NEW relationships will help our organizations grow in the months ahead.

However, for every meeting we attended or new person we met, there should be an appropriate amount of time spent FOLLOWING UP so the time INVESTED at EDS was not wasted.

Yet, some of us come back and get frustrated with all of the new work added to our already-full "IN Basket," aka email inbox, and how these new partnerships and relationships "get in the way" of doing our jobs. We now look at the time we have to SPEND on following up rather than viewing it as time to be INVESTED.

I found EDS 2017 to be great. There were a lot of folks running between the elevators, the Roasted Bean, the STILL bar, and lunch and dinner meetings. All had the goal of checking in with existing partners or gearing up to meet new ones.

A few of you found yourselves having to go "off property" for meetings and navigating the famous "Las Vegas Block" that may show an off-property meeting to be "next door,"

but in reality, it takes 30 minutes just to get there. These off-property meetings only add to already full schedules. If only ALL of the EDS attendees would stay at the Mirage! EDS gets all of us to attend, and we ALL benefit from attending. Yet, EDS does not benefit from "off-property" meetings, which actually hurt attendees' ability to effectively navigate meetings and manage their schedules. ALL of us need to support EDS as good electronics industry citizens. We all benefit as one ecosystem.

As we continue to dig out from emails and follow up action items, remember that it is NEVER too late to send a thank you note or follow up from your meeting. We've all heard the saying, 'What gets measured gets done.'

send a thank you note or follow up from your meeting. We've all heard the saying, "What gets measured gets done." Hold yourself accountable to invest the time to follow up.

All of the time that you have to SPEND after EDS was as a result of the time that you had to INVEST in attending EDS. Reap the fruits of your efforts! Do not let these valuable meeting action items or new connections wither and die because your competitor may be springing into action and reaping YOUR rewards.

Be sure to put EDS 2018 on your calendar! It promises to be even more hectic and wonderful than this year's event, and your competitors already have it on their calendar.

See you at the ERA booth next year!

Good selling!



by Walter E. Tobin

ERA CEO

e: wtobin@era.org

p: 617-901-4088

So what did you get out of EDS? All in all, it was a GREAT show for ERA. We signed up many NEW members. We had more than 500 attendees at the ECIA/ERA breakfast. We had a great turnout at the SPARK session which drew more than 50 young and bright attendees from YOUR companies. They came to learn the ropes as they try to get ready to take over this industry. Let's help prepare them as they are our future!

As we continue to dig out from emails and follow up action items, remember that it is NEVER too late to



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Florida-Sunshine ERA is the proud sponsor of the
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For details on the association and its members, go to

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Thriving through mutual respect, collaboration and partnership

Building on the theme of “Why Reps,” I had the opportunity to meet with Phillip Gerard, the vice president of sales and general manager at C&K Components Americas. Founded in 1928, C&K is one of the world’s most trusted brands for electromechanical switches. Throughout its history, C&K has used manufacturers’ representatives as its field sales partners. Phillip helped articulate the value proposition of reps and how C&K has benefited by engaging with reps as its go-to-market partners.

Access and influence

Simply stated, Phillip notes, the C&K rep firms have more “touches” with C&K’s customers in their territories because of C&K and its other, complimentary lines. The reps are influencing designs at stages other than where a decision for C&K product may be made. With this early involvement, the reps have insight to projects in some cases well in advance. The C&K reps have access and influence across the key marquee customers and emerging customers. The “pull through” this yields benefits all the reps’ principals and creates a more substantial, influential relationship with the customers in the market.

Enabling and support

C&K focuses on training and support to enable its field sales representatives although some, Phillip noted, know more about C&K products than many C&K employees due to their tenure of service. That long-term relationship serves not only C&K, but its customers and channel partners. The historic knowledge of C&K, its products and customers all serve to build the “trusted partnerships” for which C&K strives. The scope of the reps’ relationship with the distributors in the market is much more substantial than that of C&K alone. Complimentary training, prospecting and joint account planning with distributor partners are far more in depth than what could be with C&K alone. C&K enables the distributor sales

managers at the rep firms with the tools they need to support these efforts.

Customer reach

Manufacturers’ reps have solid, well-entrenched sales teams in the market. While it is recognized that the coverage measure is on a full-time equivalency basis, it still stands to reason that the rep sales organization will simply touch more customers or potential customers than C&K could without them. This is where Phillip feels C&K has a responsibility to identify the markets which C&K wishes to penetrate and has a formal and disciplined approach to lead generation, market identification, opportunity tracking, transfer business compensation and the creation of tools/collateral to focus the rep team where both can win. This creates what Phillip calls a “purpose built” sales force versus a “spray and pray” approach.

What struck me most from my time with Phillip was the very strong sense that C&K views its reps as an extension of its team and, as C&K grows and evolves, it does so in partnership with its field sales force — manufacturers’ reps.

Evolving together

What struck me most from my time with Phillip was the very strong sense that C&K views its reps as an extension of its team and, as C&K grows and evolves, it does so in partnership with its field sales force — manufacturers’ representatives. No surprise then that, based on this spirit of mutual respect and collaboration, C&K continues to outpace the market and its competitors as it thrives together WITH manufacturers’ representatives!

Hats off to the C&K representatives who, through their excellence, raise the bar for the entire rep community: **AKI, Crowley Associates, Conley Associates, Control Sales, Ewing Foley, GMA, Hannah Lind, Interep, Ion Associates, Kruvand, Luscombe, Millennium Alliance, Spectrum Marketing & Spectrum Sales.**

And thanks to Phillip Gerard and C&K for their longstanding partnership with manufacturers’ representatives!

Note: ERA member firms are highlighted in bold text.



by David Norris

Norris & Associates, Inc.

ERA President

e: dnorris@norrisrep.com



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From impotent to vigorous: A look at state sales rep statutes

“Gerry and Adam,” begins an incoming office call, “the principal who stiffed me this time didn’t remember our contract calls for Tennessee law (or Utah, Colorado, New Jersey, Georgia, etc.). I can get triple commissions, right?”

“Well,” begins the technical response to many such calls. Then, the very first legal phrase taught in law school is invoked: “That depends.”

Many independent reps are familiar with sales rep protection statutes. These state laws generally are intended to help level the playing field with their principals when a commission dispute arises.

When a rep is terminated and the commissions due go unpaid, the rep may face the daunting prospect of taking legal action against a typically much larger and better-funded manufacturer. The availability of a sales rep statute, offering the potential recovery of attorneys’ fees and “exemplary” damages, can ease the rep’s decision to pursue a commission recovery action.

Virtually no two statutes are identical, however, and the relief available when commissions are wrongly withheld under Texas law, for example, can prove vastly different than under Delaware law.

Not every state has enacted a sales rep statute. Of those that have, some are toothless tigers, offering no relief beyond what a breach of contract action provides, while others offer significantly meatier remedies.

Exemplary damages range from 0 to 3x the amount of unpaid commissions

In deciding to protect reps in California, the state legislature expressly determined that “independent wholesale sales representatives are a key ingredient to the California economy.” That statute expressly states: “Wholesale sales representatives spend many hours

developing their territory in order to properly market their products, and therefore should be provided unique protection from unjust termination of the territorial market areas.”

Like several other states, the robust California statute establishes liability against a manufacturer who fails to timely pay commissions “for treble the damages proved at trial,” plus attorneys’ fees.

A few states like New York provide for a more modest double damages recovery, while certain states like Washington have statutes requiring timely payment, but offering no additional remedy for a violation. These well-intentioned statutes offer sales reps no tangible relief.

In a league by itself is the Minnesota statute. While no exemplary damages are available under that act, it precludes manufacturers in most cases from terminating their sales rep agreements without “good cause” (unlike the traditional “any reason or no reason” standard), and even then requires providing

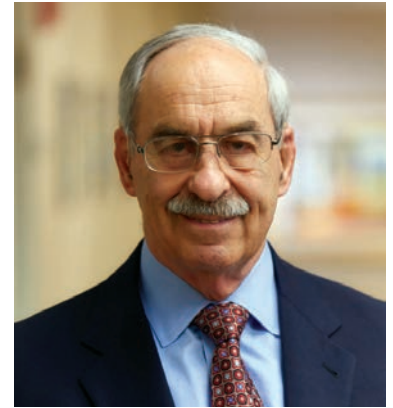
the rep a 60-day cure period. For Minnesota reps, or reps whose territory includes Minnesota, this statute can help overcome adhesive contract terms.

Limiting an act’s reach to sales within the state

Other notable differences among the statutes consist of certain states limiting the protection to sales of goods and not services, some covering only sales made to “wholesalers” not “consumers,” and some applying only to sales made within their states.

Principals sued under the various statutes will often seize on their lack of uniformity and mount challenges based on particular language. For example, a manufacturer hauled into the Columbus, Ohio, federal court in 2016 for

Not every state has enacted a sales rep statute. Of those that have, some are toothless tigers, offering no relief beyond what a breach of contract action provides, while others offer significantly meatier remedies.



by Gerald M. Newman
ERA General Counsel

Gerald M. Newman, partner in the law firm of Schoenberg, Finkel, Newman & Rosenberg, LLC, serves as general counsel to ERA and is a regular contributor to The Representor. He participates in Expert Access, the program that offers telephone consultations to ERA members.

Gerry co-authored this article with his partner, Adam Glazer.

You can call Gerry Newman or Adam Glazer at 312-648-2300 or send email to gerald.newman@sfnr.com or adam.glazer@sfnr.com.



Adam Glazer

(continued on page 22)



These companies joined ERA during the first quarter of 2017.

(The ERA chapter of each rep firm is listed in *italics* after the company name.)

REPRESENTATIVES

Alliance Southbridge, Inc.
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Thomas Johnson, CPMR
asb-inc.com

Brandel-Stephens & Co., Inc.
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Ted Toomey
brandel-stephens.com

CSC Sygnum
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Frank Sultana
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Wade Williams, Sandi Lucas
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Doris Escoto, Klaudia Kofler
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(*Pacific Northwest*)
Jennifer Eby, Mike Gunderson
marctech2.com

Omega Electronic Sales
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Ken Kidd
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Richard Duveneck, Eric Butler
psitechnologies.net

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Rob Orsini
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Schillinger Associates, Inc.
(*Indiana/Kentucky*)
Des E. Schillinger
sai-rep.com

Techni-Source Corp.
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Kevin Davis, Steve Davis
tcac.com

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Claude Hajji
xtronics.ca

MANUFACTURERS

Abracon, LLC
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Payroll taxes are not simple

We have much political agitation. We are going to have big changes to income taxes; we are going to simplify the tax code; and we are going to change the IRS. In the meantime, however, we are not going to do anything.

What has happened in the interim seems to be a renewed interest in payroll taxes. What could possibly be new? They follow an employee's pay like night the day. Yet, here we go. These cases all arise out of the employer's responsibility to pay withheld taxes to the IRS. The IRS has managed to convince the courts that the individuals in management have a trustee type relationship to turn over payroll taxes to the IRS. They are merely middle persons; the money is never theirs. If they don't send payroll taxes to the IRS they are stealing it, and they can be held PERSONALLY liable.

Outside payroll service

We begin with a case recently decided that dealt with a genuine problem that any management could face. The firm in this case hired an outside service to handle its payroll. Many firms do this. ADP is one example, though definitely not involved in this case. The service properly collected funds to cover the wages and taxes from the company and properly withheld taxes from the employees' wages. The service just didn't bother to turn the funds over to the IRS.

While not specified in the case, the assumption has to be that the payroll service spent the money on itself and had nothing left. The IRS came after the company, even though it had done everything right. The court ruled that the company still had the responsibility to make sure the taxes were paid, and would have known if it had obtained copies of IRS correspondence or had checked on its filing status with the IRS. The company was held responsible for all unpaid taxes. Thus it was out the tax money twice,

plus penalties and interest.

Tipping

When is a tip not a tip? You and some friends eat at a restaurant. The bill comes, you arrange payment and add a tip. The IRS considers this a tip as long as you, the customer, decide the amount. But suppose on this occasion there are six in your party. Very often, the restaurant adds a flat 18 percent or 20 percent tip to the amount, while encouraging you to pay more. The IRS says the flat addition is not a tip. It is simply additional wages paid by the restaurant to the waiters and support staff included in the tip; regular withholdings should be deducted.

Detached management

The third case is an important win for detached management. The collectability by the IRS for unpaid payroll taxes from management individuals rests solely on their involvement in the payroll process, causing a custodial relationship. The IRS has used this successfully

to enforce rulings where management never touched the payment process, but ordered its employees to pay suppliers or others rather than pay the payroll tax liabilities. We finally have a case where management was not involved in such a practice. Instead, it kept telling its employees to pay the taxes, changed employees when it found the taxes weren't paid and even hired an outside company to make sure the payments were paid. Still, payments to the IRS fell way behind; the payroll returns were filed but not paid. The IRS went after the company officers, but lost because it couldn't prove the officers had participated in any way with the mismanagement of the money. So there is a way out of the liability; if management has no control over either its employees or the disbursement of funds, it can avoid the IRS collection process.

The IRS has managed to convince the courts that the individuals in management have a trustee type relationship to turn over payroll taxes to the IRS. They are merely middle persons; the money is never theirs.



by Stanton B. Herzog, CPA
ERA Tax, Audit & Accounting Consultant

Stanton B. Herzog, CPA, principal in the firm of Applebaum, Herzog & Associates, P.C., Northbrook, Ill., serves as ERA's accountant and is a regular contributor to The Representor. He is available to speak at chapter or group meetings on a variety of financial and tax-related topics. He also participates in Expert Access, the program that offers telephone consultations to ERA members.

You can call Stan Herzog at 847-564-1040, fax him at 847-564-1041, or email him at sherzog@theahagroup.com.

ITEM Media, a new ERA member resource, is a results-driven marketing company that serves electronics manufacturers, suppliers and representatives. The company specializes in brand awareness, content creation, online event creation and lead generation. Visit item.media for details.

RPMS offers sales analysis, commission reconciliation and sales force data exchange software designed exclusively for manufacturers' reps. For more information, go to rpms.com.

ERA RepProtect is an insurance resource for manufacturers' representatives. Full package coverage is available, including commercial general and product liability. Unique to ERA, professional liability is available for reps who advise or provide design assistance which goes past what general liability covers. Learn more at normanspencer.com/erarepprotect, or call Byron Spencer at 800.842.3653, x223.

REPFABRIC is a mobile efficiency tool that speeds up the entire workflow of business including email, opportunity tracking, commission reconciliation and principal reporting. Contact Repfabric at info@repfabric.com, or call 844-737-7253 x225 to schedule a consultation.

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EYOND brings you Software as a Service (SaaS), an application that integrates customer relationship management (CRM), sales force automation (SFA), invoice and commission tracking, document management, reporting, data analysis and more. For details, visit mrsware.com, or call 866-795-8386.

SPYRE GROUP offers resources that help sales rep firms provide value to the manufacturers they represent and increase efficiencies for their sales teams. It provides Web, print and presentation development services, along with packaged solutions. For details, contact Patrick Knoelke at 913-499-6014, or visit spyregroup.com/rep.

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JJM SEARCH is the global executive search firm founded by Carla Mahrt, a 20-year electronics industry veteran. JJM is part of the MRI Network – leaders in the search and recruitment industry for over 40 years. Let Carla connect your company with bright, qualified candidates for your openings. For details on JJM, go to jjmsearch.com.

SCHOENBERG, FINKEL, NEWMAN & ROSENBERG, LLC, offers legal Expert Access services to all ERA members. An initial consultation on any commission recovery or other rep-related business matter is available without charge. Visit salesreplaywers.com. Or call Gerry Newman or Adam Glazer at 312-648-2300.

REMBRANDT ADVANTAGE offers tools for employee selection, development and evaluation. ERA members say they can't do without this company when bringing new people on board or evaluating current personnel. For details, visit rembrandtadvantage.com.

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ALL ERA TELEFORUM AUDIO FILES, covering 30+ educational topics for both reps and manufacturers, are now available at no charge to members. To review the teleforum library and download files, go to era.org.

*For a complete list of ERA's **Recognized Resources**, check out the Member Services page at era.org. Then link to a service provider's home page for more information. Or take advantage of services from companies like **Avis** and **Hertz Car Rentals** (which are accessible **ONLY** via the ERA website).*

Five steps to getting attention online

Recently I conducted a survey where I asked my subscribers what questions they would have if they were visiting me in Orlando and we were going to get together for just a few minutes for a “snack with Terry.”

I used Google Forms (great tool) to reach out to my subscribers, and I think you could use a similar approach to survey your community.

In this survey, one of the top questions coming through was (I’m paraphrasing here), “Terry, how can I get attention online with so much going on out there?”

This is a tough problem, and it is tougher today than ever for entrepreneurs to break through the online content clutter.

The problem is there is so much good material. We simply can’t keep up with it all. I have subscribed to about 50 great, not just good, podcasts that I love. However, I would have to listen somewhere between 20 to 30 hours each day to process all of them. Then there are another 40 to 50 subscriptions I have with great channels on YouTube. Oh, did I mention all the great websites and Facebook groups that are bursting with amazing content?

We are overwhelmed with good, even great content today. That can be bad, but you can still do well, even in a hyper-crowded marketplace. Here are some steps that I’ve found from research, personal experience and from my clients, that have worked.

Be tightly focused

Identify a niche where you have expertise and where there is a market that is ready, willing and able to pay for your services.

Provide problem-solving info –

Not just “feel good” ideas. We don’t need another “happy talk.” In business, we need solid answers to real-world problems, delivered in a pleasing and fun way.

Make it fun –

And even funny, where appropriate. Going with the flow and not making waves are sure-fire ways to be ignored. That’s not good in business.

Today, the world is crowded with lots of people jumping up and down saying, “Pick me, pick me!” Think of the donkey, who was voiced

by Eddie Murphy in the movie Shrek. When you’ve got literally thousands jumping and asking for attention, you can’t be boring.

Push the edge

Sometimes you have to push the edge, but still focus on your mission. Obviously, a fun social event will have a different tone than a solemn profession. However, within the parameters of your focus, make yourself more human and stand out in a favorable way that is context sensitive.

Keep it current

Nothing says, “I don’t give a flip” like a page, podcast or other content platform that is woefully ancient (think six months or more since last update). If you can’t stay current, don’t be there.

Survey your audience

Find out what they want. I am getting results from my survey even today as I create this article for you.

I’ve found that using Google Forms is one of the best ways to reach out to people for questions, collect information that is relevant (this is primary research from your own community), and provide serious value.

I like to make sure everyone who responds gets something of value back by either providing a direct answer to their questions or a way to get help. I also like creating a custom video, as it helps people know this is really me, not some staid form letter, and I really do care about them.

Create dazzling headlines

This is the most important part of your blog post, your YouTube video and the title of your podcast episode. We are all busy today and don’t have time to wade through time-wasters.

Here is a hot tip: Go to a YouTube channel that is similar to yours and search for videos by “most popular.” Notice what titles have gained the most attention.

Yes, this will take work. It won’t be easy; however, this is what separates the chaff from the wheat in marketing. Applying these principles can help you not only get attention, but get business.



by Terry Brock

Terry Brock is a marketing coach who helps business owners market more effectively leveraging technology. He shows busy professionals how to squeeze more out of their busy days by using the right rules and tools.

You can reach Terry at 407-363-0505, by email at terry@terrybrock.com or through his website at terrybrock.com. Also, look for Terry on Twitter @TerryBrock.

LEGALLY SPEAKING: State sales rep statutes

(continued from page 17)

non-payment of commissions moved to dismiss the claim, arguing the Ohio statute did not apply to reps making sales outside Ohio.

The manufacturer apparently relied on the original version of the Ohio statute drafted in 1988. That version made exemplary damages available for unpaid commissions to a sales rep, defined as “a person who contracts with a principal to solicit wholesale orders for a product within this state and who is compensated, in whole or in part, by commission.”

However, the Ohio legislature amended the statute in 1999, including by omitting the “within this state” phrase. Accordingly, the manufacturer’s motion was denied.

Alas, other states, including Texas and Kansas, have failed to update their statutes and retain the “within this state” limitation. Such an unnecessary and counter-productive restriction operates to the significant detriment of sales reps in these states.

Distinguishing between sales made to wholesalers and end users

As amended, the Ohio statute not only enables reps to solicit orders outside the state, but also to solicit orders for services as well as products, and is no longer limited to “wholesale orders.” These welcome changes extended the statute to reach many more deserving reps.

A similar approach was adopted in a notable 2013 California appellate court case. The court examined the statute’s exclusion of sales made to “ultimate consumers,” and rejected as “absurd” the manufacturer’s contention that this referred only to end users. Instead, the court recognized that OEMs and other entities who buy components are also consumers of goods. The court then affirmed a jury award of more than \$2 million in unpaid commissions to the rep, as well as the trebling of this award under the California rep statute, for a total award of well over \$6 million, plus attorneys’ fees.

Many statutes, however, remain applicable only to “wholesale” sales and exclude sales made to end users. This shortsighted yet common approach is found in states ranging from Oregon to Colorado to Maine. It is hoped these states too will update their statutes and follow the Ohio approach of eliminating this unhelpful and groundless distinction.

Statutory damages ≠ punitive damages

Some states have expressed concern with “out-of-control” punitive damage awards, typically arising in highly publicized, personal injury cases. Indiana, for example, restricts such awards by capping amounts and diverting 75 percent to the state’s coffers. Fortunately, awards under Indiana’s sales rep statute (which authorizes treble damages) are not considered punitive and are not subject to these restrictions.

A similar approach would seem to apply in most jurisdictions where awards entered against a principal for failing to timely pay commissions under a sales rep act are viewed as exemplary or statutory, not punitive damages. Efforts by states to rein in punitive damages should not spill over to awards specifically authorized by their legislatures to deter principals from wrongfully withholding commission payments.

Of course, exceptions are found here too, such as in the body of South Carolina’s statute, which unartfully describes its treble damages hammer as “punitive damages.” Because punitive damages are usually discretionary while statutory damages are not, use of this language promotes confusion. With sales rep statutes, including South Carolina’s, the only discretion to be applied by a judge should involve the amount to be awarded, not whether to award damages.

Ending the call

After covering some or all of the above points, the phone call with the rep nears its end. “Thanks for the help, Gerry and Adam,” winds down many a call. “And we’re not on the clock yet, right? ■

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Five steps leaders can take to honor their workers' dignity

My work has brought me up close to all kinds of leaders. They all report the same major leadership challenge: knowing what to do in charged, emotional situations. Despite collecting degrees, experience and intellectual capital, leaders rarely feel confident when facing people who are outraged, who think they are being treated unfairly, and whose unacknowledged grievances have made them irate fighters. They don't know what to do when facing people who have experienced repeated violations of their dignity.

While I witnessed the powerful impact that a violation of dignity created, I also saw how ill-equipped some leaders were in handling these emotional upheavals. Their default reaction was to use their authority and position power to control the situation, often leaving the aggrieved people angrier, more resentful and less willing to extend themselves in their jobs or roles. Their dignity violations remained unaddressed, contaminating the work environment.

Dignity is defined as being worthy of esteem or respect.

People in leadership positions need to be educated in all matters related to dignity — both the human vulnerability to being violated and the remarkable effect it has on people when they feel seen, heard, understood and acknowledged as worthy.

Leading with dignity

The emotional impact of treating someone well and honoring the person's dignity has benefits that are incalculable everywhere people cluster — in families, communities, workplaces, religious gatherings and nations. It is the easiest and fastest way to bring out the best in people. The opposite is equally true. Treat people as if they don't matter, and watch how fast a destructive, if not violent, emotional storm erupts.

Leading with dignity means leaders recognize this and willingly embody what it looks like to treat others well, to know what to do with people when they have been violated and to know what steps to take when they have violated them.

Crating a culture of dignity

Here are five steps that leaders can take to create a culture of dignity.

- Commit to learning about the role dignity plays in establishing a healthy and productive work environment.
- Be aware of the power you have to affect others. Know that if you treat people with dignity, it will strengthen your relationship — and that treating people badly will have immediate negative consequences. Leaders set the tone in the work culture.
- Make an effort to honor the dignity of your employees, in everyday interactions and in policies you create, using the 10 elements of dignity

as a guide: accepting identity, recognition, acknowledgment, inclusion, safety, fairness, independence, understanding, benefit of the doubt and accountability.

- Create a culture in which people feel safe to speak up about dignity violations they are experiencing. Invite them to talk to you regularly about ways that you or company policies might be harming them. Inherent in hierarchical structure is the possibility that leaders are insulated from taking responsibility for their hurtful behavior, and those experiencing violations from them do not feel safe to speak up for fear of retribution.

- Take action to address the situation when it is reported to you that other managers are violating the dignity of others. Make it company policy to take responsibility for the harm one causes others. No one is immune to accountability.



by Nicki Weiss

Certified Professional Sales Management Coach and Master Trainer

Nicki Weiss is an internationally recognized Certified Professional Sales and Leadership Coach, Master Trainer, thought leader, speaker and facilitator. Since 1992, she has trained and coached more than 20,000 business leaders, sales teams and reps. Nicki has a particular passion for working with manufacturers, distributors and rep firms in the electronics industry.

Nicki is ERA's sales consultant, the brainchild and facilitator of ERA's free teleforum programs and the founder of the SalesWise Academy. Every day, leaders wake up knowing that they, their technical reps and field sales engineers need to sharpen their focus and their skills. But they don't have the tools, resources or patience to continually help enhance their strategy, communication and relationship building skills. The SalesWise Academy fills that void and delivers those skill-building lessons. To learn more, go to saleswise.ca or call 416-778-4145.

People in leadership positions need to be educated in all matters related to dignity — both the human vulnerability to being violated and the remarkable effect it has on people when they feel seen, heard, understood and acknowledged as worthy.

COVER STORY: Millennial employees

(continued from page 6)

The newest generation in the workplace wants a sense of belonging. They grew up on a tee-ball team, a soccer team or one of the many school-sponsored teams during their educational years. They competed as a team and they liked having a coach, boundaries, clear rules and a strategy to win. Few found satisfaction competing against classmates and friends. Individual quotas are not as much fun as a team goal. If you see one, you can be sure there are more. Don't believe me? Just go to the mall and see for yourself.

Flexibility

Supervisors have begun to recognize that millennials need specific attention. They expect to have supervisors who are flexible. Millennials may not embrace standard work hours, and they may not be ready to stay over two extra hours just because a truck driver was late delivering parts. Don't threaten them because there is a job on every corner and two on some! In addition to on-the-job training, they will benefit from learning how a business works. Those with a degree in business will not be in the warehouse pulling orders, staging deliveries, loading trucks and managing the inventory. No matter where they work, they need basic business education to understand how they fit into the overall success of the company and how just-in-time delivery affects their paycheck. They need help to connect the dots between how their work fits into the overall company operation and their influence on profit and loss. Mindless and meaningless work will not engage them, but they are super cool with whatever they can do to earn the money they need to experience life on their terms. They are also willing to help the team — in this case, the company — win too!

They may stay with the company if they need a specific benefit, such as health insurance, but don't count on it. What they want is paid time off. Paid time off allows them to do what they like best, which is travel and experience new technology. Fewer are getting married at a young age and having children because they are not ready for a home, and they may have enormous student debt that must be paid off. Although owning a home at an early age is beyond their sight, they will donate dozens of hours to build a house with Habitat for Humanity.

Money, job growth, paid time off and an encouraging supervisor may seem like a tall order, but the reward

will be worth it. The return on that investment is a young, smart, energetic, healthy employee, who can be amazingly productive, who can unfreeze your computer screen in a flash, and show you how fast two fingers can find the best price and quickest delivery for that broken part that has your entire conveyor system down. Although you

are completely frustrated, they see that assignment as fun, and they can do that without breaking a sweat. Their bottom line is they get what they want, and you get what you want.

The future of a business lies in its ability to find and keep a stable workforce. Because we know that as many as 70 percent of employees come to us through employee referral, the challenge is to find the pathway that leads everyone to a profitable company where employees will be happy to be a recruiting resource and will tout to everyone that your place is "a great place to work." ■

Mindless and meaningless work will not engage them, but they are super cool with whatever they can do to earn the money they need to experience life on their terms. They are also willing to help the team — in this case, the company — win too!

Electronics Representatives Association



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bevans@ekmicro.com

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ken.bellero@schaaffner.com

Distributor Delegate:
Chris Beeson
chris.beeson@digiquey.com

Chief Executive Officer (Ex-Officio):
Walter E. Tobin
wtobin@era.org

ERA Staff

Chief Executive Officer:
Walter E. Tobin
wtobin@era.org

Executive Assistant:
Karin Derkacz
kderkacz@era.org

Conference Coordinator:
Tess Hill
thill@era.org

Database Manager and Webmaster:
Katherine Green
kgreen@era.org

Chapter Management & Social Media Coordinator:
Stephanie Tierney
stierney@era.org

Communications Director:
Neda Simeonova
nsimeonova@era.org

Finance Director:
William R. Warfield
bwarfield@era.org

ERA Office:

1325 S. Arlington Heights Rd., Suite 204
Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007
Phone: 312-419-1432 • Fax: 312-419-1660
Email: info@era.org • URL: era.org

ERA ANNOUNCES 2018 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

ERA has announced the appointment of the chair, vice chair and members of the committee tasked with developing the program of its 49th Management and Marketing Conference, scheduled Feb. 25-27, 2018, at the AT&T Conference Center in Austin, Texas. The chair of the committee is Rick LaPiana of the Cain-Forlaw Company, and the vice chair is John Hutson, CPMR, of the MacInnis Group. Both are returning committee members.

In addition to LaPiana and Hutson, other returning members of the ERA 2018 Conference Committee are: Holly Myers, CPMR, of Wallace Electronic Sales, who chaired the 2017 event; Ken Bellerio of Schaffner EMC; and Todd McAtee of Mouser Electronics, Inc.

New members of the committee are: John Beaver of GSA Optimum; David Foster of Sensata Technologies; Barbara Jorgensen of Electronics Purchasing Strategies (EPS); Dawn Lowery, CSP, of Sumer, Inc.; John O'Brien, CPMR, of Coakley, Boyd and Abbett, Inc., ERA Senior VP/Education; Bryan White, CPMR, of Catalyst Sales, Inc.; and Cindy Williams of Vicor Corp. ERA staff members on the committee are: Walter Tobin, CEO; Tess Hill, conference coordinator; Neda Simeonova, Crowd Compass coordinator; and Stephanie Tierney, sponsorship coordinator.

LaPiana says, "I am so happy to be working on the 2018 National Conference Committee. This year's conference was incredible, and our 2018 committee is dedicated to taking another step forward to ensure a meaningful and motivating educational experience for everyone who attends. This will be a do-not-miss event." For details about the 2018 ERA Conference, visit era.org.

INTEL TO BRING VR, AI AND OTHER HIGH TECH TO OLYMPICS

Intel Corporation reported in late June that it would become a major sponsor of the International Olympic Committee, making the chipmaker the latest technology company to put market-dollars behind the global sporting event. IOC President Thomas Bach and Chief Executive Officer Brian Krzanich said Intel's sponsorship will open up new experiences for athletes, fans and spectators in emerging areas such as virtual reality. "We'll allow people online to feel like they are there," Krzanich said. Intel says it will provide 5G wireless technology, virtual reality, artificial intelligence platforms and drones that could be used in aerial filming or light shows during the Olympics. The Intel sponsorship deal extends through 2024.

CELL PHONE USE WILL STILL BE BANNED DURING FLIGHTS

Federal regulators have decided they will not roll back any existing restrictions on air travelers' use of cell phones after all, according to a recent newsletter from Howe & Hutton, a Chicago law firm whose clients include many trade organizations. A rollback of the long-standing cell phone prohibitions was proposed by former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Tom Wheeler, who thought advances in in-flight communications had eliminated concerns about cell phone usage interfering with pilot radios. However, Wheeler's successor, Ajit Pai, has withdrawn the proposal, calling it "ill-conceived" and not in the public interest.



(Left) At ERA's Business and Hospitality Center during EDS 2017 in May, Tom Stevenson of Tom Stevenson Associates visited with ERA staff members Stephanie Tierney (center) and Karin Derkacz. New this year in the ERA center was a private meeting space that was used by many members.

(Right) The annual ERA-ECIA breakfast program at EDS drew a full house of reps, manufacturers and distributors to hear Paumanok Publications CEO Dennis Zogbi present his industry outlook for the next year.



ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

Gary Ponto, CPMR
GP Marketing
Kirkland, Wash.

AV market is undergoing a shift

The AV and security industries are doing very well so far this year. Installation companies are very busy and looking to hire technicians to handle their current work demands. This is very encouraging as many companies, which experienced reduced workloads during the recession a few years ago, were laying off people. The forecast for both of these industries projects an increase in sales of about 6 percent over 2016.

The business, however, has shifted from bid work to negotiated work for the most part. Integrators are moving their existing customers into new technology, upgraded software and hardware solutions for both AV and security application improvements. It is more profitable for companies to go back to their existing customer base for upgrades rather than compete in an open bid spec. This is also driving brand loyalty in the channels because, in most cases, they don't want to switch a customer from what was first sold to them. This is a nice change from the lack of brand loyalty we have witnessed in the past few years.

We are also seeing IT companies entering the AV and security space, specifically in tenant improvement projects and new construction where structured cabling and network improvements are a part of the overall scope of the project. This is mostly datacom, paging and sound masking; however, we are seeing datacom companies getting into AV as more products are becoming IP addressable. Integrators and electrical contractors are looking to grow by taking on as much as they can of the low-voltage projects. They are subcontracting less of the projects to other companies if they can manage these systems internally.

The move in the industry from electrical contractors doing more of the low-voltage work is driving a change in the distribution channel as well. Distributors are looking for more AV product lines to fill the requests from their contractors who are branching out into the AV space. In turn, the distributors who have primarily an electrical contractor, security or datacom customer base, are driving AV into alternative channels. As reps, we need to get a handle on these new channels of customers/integrators to capture the potential growth.

There is definitely a change coming in the AV market. National accounts and newcomers from the electrical side of the market are challenging the traditional AV integrators whom reps have worked with for years. Distribution is going to play a larger role in our businesses going forward, which is very different for this industry. However, national accounts, datacom accounts and security integrators that are looking to enter this market, or are already into AV projects, are buying through a national distributor, so we need to support this new channel as well.

MATERIALS, ASSEMBLY, PRODUCTION & SUPPLY

Troy Gunnin
Sun Rep
Tampa, Fla.

Impact of technology on business and day-to-day life

Do you remember the "Greatest Show on Earth?" No? Good, because now it is only a memory. Here in Tampa, Fla., we are only a few miles from the home of Barnum & Bailey Circus, and nostalgia reigns as we remember the excitement of the circus. The availability of entertainment at our fingertips, movies as close as the "select" button on the remote, and the desire for instant gratification make change inevitable. We see it all around us.

Do you remember when travel agents used to book our flights and hotel rooms? Do you remember standing in line waiting for a cab, or trying to hail one from the street corner? Do you remember when a company's inventories played a large part in determining its worth? Now fast forward to today. We probably use our cell phones to book a flight or hotel room, or to schedule Uber, and the ride is waiting for us.

Now, about that inventory ... Airbnb is the world's largest provider of accommodations, and the company doesn't own any real estate. Uber is the world's largest car service but owns no cars. Both have no inventories to manage, no supply chain to manage and very little overhead to maintain. They don't have to negotiate with any unions and don't have too many employees who require full benefits.

Let's look back with a little more nostalgia. Do you remember the "Sears Roebuck Cata-

log?” First you had to fill out the order form and mail it in. Maybe a week later you received your order. Now fast forward to Amazon where you place your order online, and in many cases, your order is ready the same day.

Do you remember the typewriter? Does anybody still have one in his or her office? How about the original 3M thermal copy machine and the innovative Xerox? Do you remember your first fax machine? Today you can do all of these functions using a desktop, laptop or your cellphone.

Think about the position technology holds in our world today. The “Frightful Five” — Apple, Amazon, Alphabet, Facebook and Microsoft are worth a combined \$2.87 trillion. Who will be the next technology giant?

Technology continues to shape the way we do business, and indeed, the very way we live our day-to-day lives. What does that mean to us as reps? It means that we have to stay on top of our game and utilize every tool available or we will become another “Greatest Show on Earth,” a casualty falling behind as progress passes us by.

REPS, DISTRIBUTORS AND MANUFACTURERS:

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For details and an order form, go to era.org.



Chapter News reports the local activities of the 22 chapters of ERA. The chapters sponsor educational and training workshops, local trade shows, legislative and industry projects to enhance the professionalism of individual members and to advance the goals and mission of the national association.

CAROLINAS

The chapter held a board meeting on June 23, 2017, and is continuing its monthly networking breakfasts throughout the summer.

CHICAGOLAND - WISCONSIN

On June 16, the chapter hosted a round table discussion featuring expert engineer panelists from Northrop/Grumman, Cambium and Shure. Tom Trecziak, chapter president, was the moderator.

The chapter also is preparing for its annual baseball outing. This year, the event will be held at a Chicago White Sox game, at Guaranteed Rate Field, on Aug. 2.

In addition, Joe Braun, CPMR, chapter board member, recently participated as a co-facilitator in the May ERA teleforum, "Time and Territory Management."

Bob Evans, CPMR, chapter board member and chair of the Chapter Leadership Council for ERA, is currently preparing for the upcoming Chapter Officers Leadership Training (COLT) event in the fall.

EMPIRE STATE

The chapter Annual Charity Golf Event will be held at Ravenwood Country Club, on

Monday, Aug. 8. A signature event, Empire uses the tournament to raise money for a scholarship, facilitate a cancer charity donation, and have a day of fun with industry colleagues, customers and members of the community.

Empire installed new board members as directors who have been active in taking roles in event planning, fundraising and chapter management in 2017. The chapter thanks Audrey Mastro of IEWC and Steve Bognacki of Covalent Tech for stepping in and rolling up their sleeves to keep Empire moving forward.

Empire also thanks departing board member Scott Caliel of LD Allen for his service as vice president of programming and especially for his mentorship of the golf tournament.

FLORIDA - SUNSHINE

On June 5, the chapter hosted a rep-distributor forum. ERA CEO Walter Tobin opened the program with an ERA update. Cesare Giammarco, special consultant for ERA, followed with a presentation called, "Reps/Distributors and the Manufacturers Channel Directives-Singular Goal, Shared Challenges." Barry Farber, president of HHP Associates, and Lisa Dietrich of Conley and Associates also presented the 2017 DTAM survey report at the event.

INDIANA - KENTUCKY

Indiana-Kentucky ERA is currently planning its annual golf tournament. The event is set for Sept. 8.

NEW ENGLAND

The chapter held a program on May 3. The "Technology Swap Shop" breakout presentation from the 2017 ERA Conference was presented to reps, distributors and manufacturers at the event.

The chapter also honored Norm MacInnis, who received the ERA Life Member award at the National ERA Board Meeting.

NEW YORK

The chapter held its 2nd Annual ERA Charity Golf Outing on June 19 at St. George's Golf and Country Club, in Stony Brook, N.Y. The event concluded with dinner, prizes and awards. A portion of the proceeds from the event were donated to several local organizations dedicated to improving the welfare of veterans.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The chapter held a Golf Classic on June 7 at the Santa Clara Golf and Tennis Club. The

COLT 2017 slated in October-November

ERA's Chapter Officers Leadership Training (COLT) program is scheduled to run this year in a one-hour webinar on Tuesday, Oct. 24, followed by an in-person workshop on Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 8 - 9 in Chicago.

COLT is a training program for anyone interested in taking a leadership position in their local ERA chapter. Chapter officers, both current and future, come together for an intensive program teaching practical knowledge, tips and ERA insider information to help them meet the challenges of serving as a volunteer leader. The COLT program details how to effectively run a chapter, including hosting events, chapter bylaws, member recruitment, educational programming and more.

COLT is coordinated by Bob Evans, CPMR, president of EK Micro and chair of the Chapter Leadership Council, Stephanie Tierney, chapter management coordinator for ERA, and Walter Tobin, ERA CEO.

"The COLT program remains a vital part of ERA. Program participants share invaluable ideas, brainstorm, network and leave the program with a new sense of wisdom and energy to take back to their chapters. We are looking forward to another successful training program this year with a great group of candidates," Tobin said.

For more information on ERA's COLT program, visit era.org/?p=16026.

event concluded with a barbecue at David's restaurant on the golf course.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The chapter announced the appointment of two new officers. Dave Fitzgerald, owner of WESCO Sales Group, was appointed as chapter president, and Tim Doran, CPMR, a second-generation owner of Doran Associates, was chosen as chapter vice president.

The appointment of Doran and Fitzgerald has been met with increased enthusiasm among the chapter members, especially with the involvement of the Seattle-based members. The new officers will be instrumental in moving the Pacific Northwest Chapter forward.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

On June 7, the Southern California ERA held a program, "Keeping Partnerships in Harmony," at the House of Blues, in Anaheim, Calif. Bryan Shirley moderated a rep and distributor panel discussion. The panel included Bruce Kellar of Sager Electronics, Robert Platter of Future Electronics, John Crawford of Digi-Key, George Gibbons of O'Donnell South and Dan

Parks, CPMR, of West Electronics.

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

On June 23, the chapter held a "Cyber Security" networking lunch. The guest speaker was Jeff Shaffer, director of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Shaffer joined PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2015 after 25 years with the U.S. Secret Service as a senior special agent and director of the top ranked Secret Service Digital Forensics Laboratory. Shaffer has worked on hundreds of forensic investigations related to cybercrime, IP theft and fraud, across numerous industries including energy, retail, banking, healthcare, telecommunications and federal/state governments.

SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS

The chapter welcomed Marshall Strouse to its May meeting. He is currently an instructor at TechShop, a resource center including mechanical (CNC/milling machines, water jet, 3D printer), electrical, software tools, classes, etc. The TechShop resources are valuable to the rep community because reps can direct small and start-up customers to utilize this facility.



SAVE THE DATES!

ERA's conference is coming back in 2018 on Feb. 25-27 in a return to Austin, Texas, at the AT&T Conference Center.

Visit era.org for more details!

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- Line Portfolio Evaluation
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- Selling Through Manufacturers' Representatives
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- Recommended Technical Standards for Distribution Point-of-Sale Reporting
- FAQs Manufacturers Ask About Representatives
- Split Influence Recommendations for the Electronics Industry
- State Rep Commission Protection Acts
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ERA Meetings & Programs

- Board of Directors Meeting - October 2017
- 49th Management and Marketing Conference - Feb. 25-27, 2018

A book review and recommendation by Dan Beaulieu

Ask More: The Power of Questions to Open Doors, Uncover Solutions, and Spark Change

by Frank Sesno/Foreword by Wolf Blitzer

Copyright: 2017

Price: \$54

Pages: 249 and Index

Great interviewing tips from one of the pros

Yes, this is a book about asking questions. More importantly, it is a book about the power of asking the right questions, in the right order to find out what you need to know, when you need to know it and more.

Longtime CNN anchor and Washington bureau chief Frank Sesno has written a book that is a tool that all of us can use. For those of us in business, the chapter on how to ask the right questions of job candidates to ensure that you choose the right candidate is in itself worth the price of the book. For example, questions such as "You have to cut 15 percent of your budget. What do you do? Where do you start?" can be very helpful during interviews. I think I am going to use these in every interview I conduct from now on.



This is a book of questions for every occasion — from finding new and innovative ideas from your creative team to doing a confrontational interview with someone from whom you have to get answers right away. It offers advice about how to talk to famous celebrities, including how to put them at ease enough to give one of the best and most candid interviews they have ever done. The book is also filled with many true-life examples from some of the best and most famous interviewers in the world.

One interesting example in the book of how questions can change the course of history is when a reporter asks President Reagan's White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes to talk about the AIDS epidemic back in 1982. Speakes did not even know what AIDS was at the time. He tried to make a joke of the exchange, and in doing so, he made himself and the president look bad.

I can't say enough about this unique and very useful book. For anyone who has to interact with anyone, this is the right book. For anyone who asks questions for a living, whether it be a teacher, an investigator, a sales manager interviewing potential sales candidates, or a turn-expert looking for the things he is going to have to fix, this is the most important book on this subject I have ever read.

Dan Beaulieu is the president and founder of D.B. Management, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in all aspects of sales, marketing and branding with a focus on rep-principal relationships. His latest book is **The PCB 101 Handbook** which can be purchased online by emailing danbbeaulieu@aol.com. Dan is also the author of "It's Only Common Sense," a weekly sales column appearing at pcb007.com. Dan can be reached at 207-649-0879.

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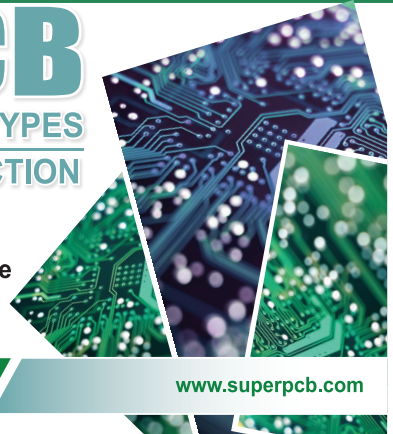
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MR Series 2 or 3 Axis Joystick 5K Ohm Precision Pot. Finger Tip Controlled Spring Return to Center 80° Deflection from Center Sealed up to IP54 5 Handle Options	HE1 Series 2 or 3 Axis Joystick Precision Hall Effect Finger Tip Controlled Spring Return to Center 5 Million Life Cycles Sealed up to IP67 13 Handle Options	MH Series 2 or 3 Axis Joystick Precision Hall Effect Finger Tip Controlled Spring Return to Center 5 Million Life Cycles Sealed up to IP54 10 Handle Options	
SS2 Series 2, 4 or 8 Way Switch (OFF-MOM) Spring Return to Center 18° Deflection from Center Fully Sealed (IP67 Above Panel)	HS1 Series 4, 8, 16 or 32 Way "Hat" Switch Fully Sealed to IP67	FNR Series Hall Effect Technology 3 Position Switch (Pos./Mes./Rev.) 30° Deflection from Center Fully Sealed (IP67 Above Panel) 3 Million Life Cycles <1" Above Panel Height	
HCK Series Hall Effect Control Knob IP67 Above Panel Seal 40° Deflection from Center			HED Series 3 Axis Hall Effect Joystick 4 or 10 Button Housing 0.1 or 0.2 Button Jitter Standard USB (HID) Interface
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