

The *Representer*[®]

THE VOICE OF MULTIPLE-LINE SELLING IN THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

FALL 2015

era
Electronics
Representatives
Association



**How ERA
members have
improved their
companies
this year**



1971



1978



1989



2015

More than 40 years later, we're still delivering on what we promise.

People. Parts. Peace of mind.



The Specialist in IP&E Component Distribution

1.800.CALL.TTI | ttiinc.com

ELECTRONICS

REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION

Advancing and supporting the outsourced field sales function in the global electronics marketplace through programs and activities that educate, inform and advocate for professional manufacturers' representatives and their principals



Founded 1935

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:

Tess Hill

thill@era.org

Advertising Manager:

Stephanie Tierney

stierney@era.org

Cover:

Scott Kolbe

Sikich Graphic Design & Marketing

ERA IS A MEMBER OF THE:

- Alliance of Manufacturers' Representatives Associations
- Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Research Foundation
- Small Business Legislative Council
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce

■ THE REPRESENTOR (ISSN 1057-0373) (Vol. 26, Issue 4), is published by Electronics Representatives Association, 309 West Washington Street, Suite 500, Chicago, Illinois 60606. First annual subscription per ERA member company or manufacturer member is \$15.00. Additional ERA member company or manufacturer member annual subscriptions are \$12.00 each. Non-member annual subscriptions are \$24.00. Foreign annual subscriptions are \$40.00. Single copies are available at \$6.00 per copy. (All prices quoted are payable in U.S. dollars.) American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Discover charges accepted.

■ Copyright 2015 by Electronics Representatives Association. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

■ Statements of fact and/or opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply an opinion of the officers or members of ERA. Send letters to the editor (regarding magazine material) to: Editor, THE REPRESENTOR, c/o Electronics Representatives Association, 309 West Washington Street, Suite 500, Chicago, Illinois 60606. Phone: 312-419-1432; Fax: 312-419-1660.

ERA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2015 - 2017

Chairman of the Board:

Paul Nielsen, CPMR

Board President:

Dan Parks, CPMR

Senior Vice President/Fiscal & Legal:

David Norris

Senior Vice President/Education:

Kathie Cahill, CPMR

Senior Vice President/Membership:

John O'Brien, CPMR

Senior Vice President/Industry:

Chuck Tanzola, CPMR

CEO / Executive Vice President

(Ex-Officio):

Walter E. Tobin

CONSULTANTS AVAILABLE FOR EXPERT ACCESS

Accounting & Taxes:

Stan Herzog

847-564-1040

sherzog@theahagroup.com

Executive Searches:

Carla Mahrt

402-721-6590

carla@jjmsearch.com

Insurance:

John Doyle

888-243-0174

jdoyle@adcbenefits.com

Legal:

Gerald Newman

312-648-2300

gerald.newman@sfnr.com

Professional Field Sales:

Ray Hall

419-957-6354 • rhall@era.org

Rep Network Mgmt. & Exec Searches:

Jim Hartranft

262-945-9200

jlhconsultinginc@earthlink.net

ADVERTISING MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Book size: 8-1/2" wide by 11-1/4" deep, untrimmed;
8-3/8" wide by 11" deep, trimmed.

Advertisement Sizes (width by depth):

	Non-bleed	Bleed (untrimmed)*
2-page spread	15-1/4 x 10" **	17-1/4" x 11-1/4"
Full page	7" x 10"	8-1/2" x 11-1/4"
2/3 page	4-1/2" x 10"	5-1/8" x 11-1/4"
1/2 page island	4-1/2" x 7-3/8"	5-1/8" x 7-3/4"
1/2 page vertical	3-3/8" x 10"	4" x 11-1/4"
1/2 page horizontal	7" x 4-7/8"	7-1/2" x 5-3/8"
1/3 page vertical	2-1/4" x 10"	2-7/8" x 11-1/4"
1/3 page square	4-1/2" x 4-7/8"	5-1/8" x 5-1/2"
1/4 page	3-8" x 4-7/8"	Not available
1/6 page vertical	2-1/4" x 4-7/8"	Not available
1/6 page horizontal	4-1/2" x 2-1/2"	Not available

* Keep all live matter 3/8" from outside edges.

** Allows for gutter bleed of 5/8" per page.

To place an advertisement in

The Representor, contact:

Stephanie Tierney at

stierney@era.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 COVER STORY: How ERA members have improved their companies this year

Read how a number of ERA companies have implemented improvements this year and what results they are seeing.

10 Introducing ... ERA's new CEO, Walter Tobin

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

9 SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW: Ben Barden

11 EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY: Thanks for the memories of many wonderful years!

13 FROM THE TOP: There's good news on two fronts this fall for both ERA and reps

14 NEWS BEAT

15 FROM THE ASSOCIATION ROUND TABLE: What I've learned about the impacts of rep commission cuts

17 LEGALLY SPEAKING: Death, disability, retirement: Putting the success in succession planning

18 BUSINESS BOOK REVIEW: *Be Your Customer's Hero: Real World Tips and Techniques for the Service Front Lines*

19 SALESWISE: How and why we should all stop multi-tasking

21 THE SUBJECT IS TAXING: New for 2015: The tax code doesn't get easier!

23 TECH TOOLS AND TIPS: Every salesperson needs these seven tools for success today

24 CHAPTER NEWS

26 MARKETING GROUP DIGEST:

- Components
- Electronic Systems Integration
- Instrumentation, Automation & Controls
- Materials, Assembly, Production & Supply
- RF / Microwave & Wireless

31 MEMBER SERVICES

32 CLASSIFIED ADS

Don't miss all the services, information and resources available online, 24-7, on ERA's ALL-NEW website. Visit era.org.

FALL 2015



**How ERA
members have
improved their
companies
this year**



“What have you done for me lately?” That question seems to be somewhat of a universal mantra today and even more so in business when everyone is being tasked to do more with less. In the electronics industry environment — overloaded with the pressures of constant change, seemingly never-ending demands and expectations for instant responses — it is becoming more and more difficult for company owners and managers to carve out time to work ON their businesses versus IN them.

Finding time to plan is tough enough, but making the concerted effort to develop, install and evaluate improvements in a company can be daunting. That wasn't the case, however, for a number of ERA members who answered a quick email survey about the positive changes they've made this year.

With the goal of sharing best practices and perhaps inspiring others to follow their leads, the respondents answered these three questions:

... making the concerted effort to develop, install and evaluate improvements in a company can be daunting. That wasn't the case, however, for a number of ERA members ...

1) Within the past year, what improvements have you implemented that benefitted your company?

2) Thanks to these improvements, what specific results are you experiencing?

3) What further improvements are you planning for the next year?

Not unexpectedly, many responses were quite brief, but others were more detailed. The answers cover technology, operational processes, personnel and staffing, principal shifts and more. Here's a sampling of what ERA members reported.

Changes to processes and technology

By far the most commonly-cited improvements made by ERA members pertain to technology and/or company processes. For example, Brad Starr, CPMR, of Performance Technical Sales in North Carolina, notes, “We engaged with Concur which automates the expense payment process in our company. All sales[people] have a Concur app on their phones and take pictures of their receipts, [which] feed into an automated expense report to be approved and paid by management. We've found it very helpful and productive. As the owner, I'm comforted by the fact that I have digital copies of all receipts and expense reports.” And the results? Starr says that the firm as a whole is spending less time on processing expenses and now has a better system

of reporting and managing receipts and expenses.

At Moss Marketing in Colorado, Dave Basila, CPMR, relates that his team is fully utilizing Dropbox to make data and presentations easily available. This change is saving time for the salespeople, “allowing them to cover more ground.” Next up in terms of improvements will be updated sample kits for multiline demonstrations.

A Minnesota rep who prefers anonymity describes how his firm held formal training meetings with an expert in LinkedIn. As a result, he confirms, “We have been able to better penetrate into target companies by finding people and setting up meetings with those who can influence decision-making for the purchase of our products.”

Al Johnson, Jr., CPMR, of Current Solutions in Florida, reports on the modernization and updating of his company website. He says, “We added a chat feature which has resulted in some people contacting us when they might not have [done so] via email.” Next up for the website, Johnson notes, “We will be adding more content, including white papers.”

Responding for another North Carolina firm, Holly Myers, CPMR, of Wallace Electronic Sales, describes the development of an Excel daily call report: “Each person in our firm spends less than five minutes per day noting each account we work with. We note which lines were either introduced or discussed to move an opportunity forward. We also have a notation for potential line usage in cases where there is no current opportunity for a particular principal, yet [there] could be future applications for the line. We also log the industry as well as the contacts we talked to or met with.”

As far as results, Myers continues: “The report allows us to analyze our efforts for each of our principals as well as monitor our call patterns throughout the territory. We use the data when considering a new line and looking for potential accounts by filtering our activities with synergistic lines. The call report is especially helpful when planning joint calls with principals as we can easily see which of our current accounts in each territory would have potential for each of our lines. In addition to sending open opportunity reports, we periodically summarize the call sheet data and send the information to principals to let

(continued on next page)

COVER STORY: Company improvements

(continued from previous page)

them know which accounts we are calling on for their lines.”

What’s coming next for Wallace? Myers says, “We continue to look at new ways to market our principals’ products and services. We are also considering developing a mobile app.”

CRM systems were mentioned by several reps. At the J. F. Hurlbut Company in Colorado, a new CRM system was installed this year, including staff training. Dave Hurlbut says it has improved the firm’s capture and retrieval of detailed information on contacts, what they buy, opportunity tracking and more.

ERA President Dan Parks, CPMR, of West Electronic Sales, adds, “We implemented a new CRM system, and after several attempts, we may have gotten it right. It has made us more efficient in our principal reporting and has made access to our sales information much less onerous. We plan to expand our exposure over the next few months to further integrate our accounting functions into this program.”

From northern California, Ben Barden of Westech Associates replies that his firm “improved the organization of our Salesforce data-

base and instituted a new email tracking program. With the email program, we can instantly see the success of each email campaign and adjust accordingly. The reports give us information on the percentage who opened the email, who clicked on our link, who emailed us back and, last but not least, ultimately resulted in an NBO.” Coming next, Barden says, “We will be adding new templates for introducing products, making appointments, following up quotes and staying in touch.”

At Catalyst Sales in Pittsburgh, Tom Griffin,

CPMR, chair of ERA’s 2016 Conference Committee, reports that his company has stepped up both its video and social marketing. The results have been “increased leads for us in our territory, generating leads for our principals outside our territory and greater customer awareness of our company and products.” Also among technology improvements, Griffin says Catalyst soon “will deploy iPads with appropriate apps.”

At the Fusion Sourcing Group, the upstate New York firm of ERA Senior VP/Industry Chuck Tanzola, CPMR, a number of technology-related improvements have been installed recently, including: upgrading laptops to include solid state drive (SSD) technology for faster memory access; upgrading the spam filter software on the firm’s server; and increasing the encryption for the server to enhance security. Tanzola observes, “The expense of updating software is accelerating, and the proliferation of ‘software as a service’ models by suppliers is making things more expensive. I am not an expert, but many believe that the cloud is the answer to offset those costs, but there are other issues associated with that as well. This is a real expense squeeze on small businesses, which most reps are.”

Mike Kunz, CPMR, of R. W. Kunz & Associates in the St. Louis region, mentions that his firm is using principals’ marketing funds for territorial social media blitzes. This move has allowed his firm’s inside personnel to “concentrate on sales issues.”

Changes related to personnel

Shifting to improvements related to personnel and staffing, Kunz also relates a successful effort to reduce benefits expenses. If a Kunz employee has a spouse who is covered under his or her employer for medical insurance, the rep firm covers the cost of adding the Kunz employee to the spouse’s plan. As anticipated, this tactic has reduced insurance expenditures.

The recent acquisition of another rep firm has helped EK Micro in the Chicago area “strengthen our personnel and principal lineup,” according to Bob Evans, CPMR. “The benefits of doubling our field sales force for both sets of principals are already obvious,” he adds. “We are seeing more opportunities at current customers.”

Mark Myers, CPMR, of Vic Myers Associates in Arizona, has found “the most noticeable improvement” for his company this year has been “having the salespeople in different locations spend more time helping each other and comparing notes.” This strategy has included having the more experienced salespeople travel with those who are newer to the firm. This practice, he

The results of stepping up both video and social marketing have been “increased leads for us in our territory, generating leads for our principals outside our territory and greater customer awareness of our company and our products.”

— Tom Griffin, CPMR



**The “GO-TO Law Firm”
for Sales Reps Nationwide**
with over 60 Years Experience Protecting Independent Sales Reps

SalesRepLawyers.com

Based in Chicago, Serving Sales Reps Nationwide

SCHOENBERG FINKEL NEWMAN & ROSENBERG, LLC

-  **Is a principal refusing to pay (or underpaying) commissions due?**
We have recovered millions in commissions for reps.
-  **Need a rep, sub-rep or employment contract drafted or reviewed?**
We have decades of experience preparing rep contracts.
-  **Terminated after landing the big customer?**
We know how to obtain payment.
-  **Buying, selling or merging a rep firm?**
We have lawyers experienced in rep firm economics.

FREE
20 MINUTE
Initial Consultation
with **NO** obligation.
Just mention
ERA.



CONTACT: 312.648.2300

GERALD NEWMAN
gerald.newman@sfnr.com

ADAM GLAZER
adam.glazer@sfnr.com

SalesRepLawyers.com

222 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 2100 • Chicago, IL 60606 • 312.648.2300

continues, “is helping with training, improving internal relationships and building trust. It is also creating a stronger culture of helping each other to be successful.”

Fusion Sourcing’s Tanzola also has made training improvements in his company. “We have created some internal training presentations on specific technology areas to increase our sales team’s general knowledge ... These are not principal-specific but more related to technology areas [and] general in nature. Of course, we have scheduled a number of principal training sessions, both in person and via web-based systems. We have tried to schedule training at times that do not conflict with prime customer sales time — always a challenge.”

In the Pacific Northwest, Dave Fitzgerald’s firm, the Wesco Sales Group, has added a business development position to its staff. This person, comments Fitzgerald, serves “as a liaison between field sales and the principals we represent.” The new staff member handles data mining, lead generation, email campaigns, focus account engineering solution selling and more. Other tasks outlined by Fitzgerald include setting up appointments for the field sales team as they travel and filling blank spots in individual calendars with warm leads.

As a result of this addition, he adds, “Meetings are pre-qualified with objectives clearly outlined. Field sales goes in and frames up the opportunity and presents it to the principal. This is taking some of the pre-call planning and meeting set-up off the shoulders of field sales. It provides a way to augment the meetings the salespeople are putting together to better fill up their day. It provides additional customer touches at focus accounts and has proven to be a time saver for field sales — something we can all take advantage of.”

On another personnel matter, Fitzgerald says the firm is outsourcing its accounting process to a CPA, “fully allowing us to do what we excel at” and leaving the bookkeeping to a certified accountant. He confirms that there are also “significant savings” from this move, which may allow the company to expand its field sales staff.

A Chicago rep who asks to remain anonymous also added a business development manager this year. He describes, “This position is dedicated to generating, qualifying, distributing, following up and recording all leads, first-time buys and customer/market information that comes into the company. A key part of generating leads [involves] social media and an electronic marketing campaign on behalf of all principals. The result is a much more efficient and effective way of managing, uncovering and qualifying any emerging

company, market or contact within the market.”

This rep owner also notes, “The business development manager is a ‘millennial,’ and at the end of this year we will add another millennial in an outside sales position. The benefits are that they are ‘digital natives,’ attuned to today’s preferred communications methods, more aggressive and therefore more efficient.”

On a final note regarding improvements related to personnel, Hod Irvine of High Tech Sales in Minnesota comments that he reminds his team continuously about the need to maintain close personal relationships with customers and principals, despite all the communication tools now available. “This means entertaining and customer visits remain very important,” he says. Irvine also believes that employing people who can work together is equally critical. “In the age of chasing the almighty dollar,” he adds, “it’s still important to have a rep firm that rows together, covers for one another and gets the job done as a cohesive unit.”

Changes regarding principals

Moving on to improvements relating to rep firm principals, Bob Evans says his firm’s acquisition of another rep company indeed expanded the EK Micro line card. However, he qualifies, “We will be cutting the number of principals. We have to focus our energy on [those that are] the most profitable and have the most potential.”

On a similar note, Dan Jakubowski of Jay Marketing in Michigan says the improvement that benefitted his firm this past year was eliminating a high-maintenance line. As a result, he says, “We have more time to intelligently sell the remaining lines.”

And likewise, Alan Armstrong of Power Comp Sales in New England reports

(continued on page 16)

As a result of this addition [of a business development manager], “Meetings are pre-qualified with objectives clearly outlined. Field sales goes in and frames up the opportunity and presents it to the principal ...”
— Dave Fitzgerald



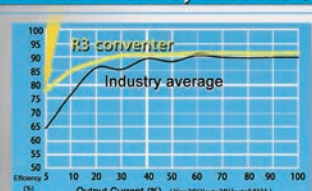
Save Energy In Your Power System

with MORNSUN R3 DC-DC Converter



Stand-by power consumption low to 0.12W

Light-load efficiency exceeds 78%




support@mornsunamerica.com
www.mornsunamerica.com
TEL: 978-567-9610

ERA's 47TH MANAGEMENT & MARKETING CONFERENCE



*Sunday evening thru Tuesday afternoon,
FEB. 28 TO MARCH 1, 2016
AT&T Conference Center, Austin, Texas*

**ERA THANKS THESE GENEROUS
SPONSORS WHO HAVE ALREADY
COMMITTED THEIR SUPPORT:**

KEYNOTE SPONSOR:
DIGI-KEY ELECTRONICS

PROGRAM SPONSORS:
FUTURE ELECTRONICS
TTI, INC.

DIAMOND SPONSORS:
ARMSTRONG, DOYLE & CARROLL, INC.
ASTRON ELECTRONICS
CATALYST SALES
EMPOWERING SYSTEMS
EMT ENGINEERING SALES, INC.
JJM SEARCH
KRUVAND ASSOCIATES, INC.
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ERA
O'DONNELL ASSOCIATES NORTH
SCHAFFNER EMC
WESCO SALES GROUP, INC.

PLATINUM SPONSORS:
CAIN - FORLAW COMPANY
COAKLEY, BOYD AND ABBETT, INC.
HUGHES PETERS
NET SALES COMPANY
NEW ENGLAND ERA
WALLACE ELECTRONIC SALES

GOLD SPONSORS:
CHICAGOLAND - WISCONSIN ERA
D-M ASSOCIATES
EK MICRO
FLORIDA - SUNSHINE ERA
GLOBAL CHOICE INTERNATIONAL
LAIRD
QUELL CORPORATION
ROCKY MOUNTAIN ERA
WEST ELECTRONIC SALES

SILVER SPONSORS:
ALLIED ELECTRONICS
CONQUEST TECHNICAL SALES
INDIANA - KENTUCKY ERA
MICHIGAN ERA
NEW YORK ERA
PRECISION RESISTIVE PRODUCTS

**FOR PROGRAM AND SPONSORSHIP
DETAILS, GO TO ERA.ORG.**



Ben Barden
Owner
Westech Associates

With so many ERA members, it's not easy to get to know every rep and manufacturer 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 Ben Barden of Westech Associates in Mountain View, Cal. Ben is a third-generation rep who has been involved in the industry for more than three decades and has been active in ERA since 1985.

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

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I have been married 35 years to my amazing South African wife Sue. We have two sons, David, 31, and Michael, 26 years old. We enjoy watching college football, especially Notre Dame and Clemson, my sons' alma maters. Golf is my favorite hobby, but I also enjoy weight lifting, playing the guitar, cooking and traveling.

What are some things you enjoy outside of the workplace?

Since becoming empty nesters, Sue and I have had more time to travel. Our favorite way to travel is cruising. We have been on 35 cruises over the past 20 years, and we especially love the Mediterranean.

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

My firm has been an ERA member since 1978. I started in the rep business in 1982 and became active in ERA in 1985. I have served in a number of capacities in the Northern California Chapter, from the newsletter editor to president. I'm presently the chapter's national delegate.

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

I actually come from a long line of manufacturers' reps. My father, grandfather and uncle were all reps. My dad is still an active rep at 88 years old. And now, it's a point of pride that my son David recently joined our firm as a part-time consultant.

In the back of my mind, I was always interested in getting into the business, and when the opportunity to join a rep firm presented itself, I jumped in and never looked back. The rep lifestyle gave me flexibility to do more with my kids growing up, which I think is a big benefit.

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

The best part of the rep business is the friends I've made with both customers and reps. The support network has been invaluable.

Briefly describe your rep firm.

Our rep firm was established by Bill Walsh and Ron Jenkins in 1975. Our products are mainly passive/electromechanical. In the early years, board level components were a big part of our focus, but recently custom engineered

type products have become a major part of our sales. Generic products, as I'm sure everyone knows, are very difficult to track for off-shore credit. Recently we were very fortunate to have joined forces with our newest staff members, Alex Cox and veteran Hugh Shyba.

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

New technology has been a big driver of our changes recently. Every area of our business has been affected - starting with the new Internet phone system, updated website, change from ACT to Salesforce, Google Docs, Google Calendar, Dropbox, Evernote, Tout email system tracker and, last but not least, LinkedIn.

Since our data now reside on the Internet, our team members have access to all data no matter where they are. It's so much easier to keep everything up and running without having to make a special trip back to the office to reboot the server! This has helped us to be more efficient in keeping up with the fast-paced Silicon Valley design cycles.

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?

Our best ideas have come from other reps. Leads on new line opportunities, customer targets, technology, management and personal development are a just a few of the areas where we have benefited from networking. It's invaluable to gain another rep's opinion on challenges we face and reassuring to know we aren't the only ones struggling in problem situations.

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

LinkedIn has been our biggest focus. With engineers moving around Silicon Valley, it's a vital tool for staying in touch. When trying to break into new target accounts, we can identify new contacts which otherwise would be impossible to obtain. I like the LinkedIn ERA groups that discuss various topics vital to our business.

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

I am learning to play the banjo. It is more challenging than I anticipated!

INTRODUCING ...



ERA'S NEW CEO,
WALTER E. TOBIN

On Sept 14, 2015, Walter E. Tobin assumed the post of chief executive officer and executive vice president of ERA, taking over the joint responsibilities of Tom Shanahan, the CEO since 2004, and Bob Terwall, who for several years held the staff position of association president. Tobin's hiring was recommended by the ERA Search Committee, chaired by Mark Conley, ERA's immediate past chairman of the board. The appointment was then approved by the ERA Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

Tobin is an electronics industry veteran with more than 30 years of experience in sales, marketing and executive/corporate management positions. For the last nine years, he was the corporate vice president of Future Electronics, and prior management positions included 12 years at Pioneer-Standard (acquired in 2003 by Arrow Electronics) and 15 years at Arrow Electronics. Tobin holds both a B.S. and MBA from Boston College and is a former U.S. Army Captain.

Before he began his tenure with several days of ERA staff meetings in Chicago, Tobin was interviewed by *The Representer* about his new role. Read on to learn what he had to say.

Q: How well do you know the rep business and function?

I've worked with reps from day one of my career when I was a buyer for a distributor. Most of the lines I was buying were handled by reps, and the first rep I met was [ERA Hall of Fame member] the late Tim Coakley. The young distribution manager with him was Bob Walsh [of Coakley, Boyd and Abbett, Inc., a past president and chairman of ERA]. I learned right away that working with reps is all about relationships

I've worked with reps from day one of my career ... So I've always understood and respected the rep model.

and the reps keeping their word.

So I've always understood and respected the rep model. Reps are an extension of their principals, acting as their field sales force, selling into customers and supporting distributors as partners, NOT competitors, and in concert with their suppliers. They

provide sales and technical training and drive revenue for their manufacturers.

Then four years ago at Future, I convinced Mr. Miller [Robert Miller, the founder of Future] to form a rep council, making it the only distributor with a formal rep council. I headed up the council and, over the last few years, I also coordinated many visits to the Future headquarters in Montreal by groups of 20 reps at a time. For all the council meetings and those rep visits, Future pays all expenses. So I've spent a lot of time with reps in recent years and have enjoyed every minute.

Q: What has been your background with ERA?

I've known ERA over the years and worked with two past presidents, Mark Conley and Bob Walsh, as well as other members on the Future Rep Council. I've known Tom Shanahan and Bob Terwall from industry events in recent years, and I began to engage more with the association when I spoke at the last two ERA conferences. Future was a sponsor of those events, and it is again this year. I've also been interviewed for several articles in past issues of *The Representer*.

Q: What prompted your interest in the ERA CEO position?

I thought this would be a chance for me to use my knowledge of the distribution channel and the manufacturing community to continue ERA's advocacy of the rep model to our industry. I know many rep firm senior managers and owners, and I've always been impressed with the professionalism of ERA members. This opportunity also allows me to give back to the industry that has been my home for my entire career.

Q: What are you looking forward to in your first year, and what are your main goals?

There's quite a list! First, I want to improve my understanding of ERA and get grounded in the organization so I can represent it across the industry and articulate its value proposition.

Second, my goal is to grow the membership by showing a strong value proposition while expanding ERA into a truly global organization. For instance, the rep model in Europe is very different than in North America. Most reps there are stocking reps.

(continued on page 12)

Thanks for the memories of many wonderful years!

Not being Bob Hope, I'm not about to break into his theme song, but I do have many thanks to extend as my term as ERA's CEO concludes. (And I wonder if some of our younger readers know who Bob Hope was!)

In 1984, my friend of many years and ERA's then CEO, Ray Hall, knew I would be in Europe at the same time ERA was holding its conference in London. He invited me to stop by, and I did. One of the first people I had the good fortune to meet in London was the late Jess Spoonts, who was ERA's chairman at the time and would eventually be elected to ERA's Hall of Fame. Jess urged me to "stick around" for the conference. Not being able to resist his southern charm and his assurance that I would meet many terrific people, I did indeed "stick around" ... and now it's been more than three decades!

In my earliest years with ERA, I handled some legal work for both ERA and its Insurance Trust as well as individual members. Eventually, I was appointed COO under Ray and then CEO after his retirement in 2004.

In all these years, the one indelible impression I've had of ERA is that it is a FAMILY. This has been, by far, the most rewarding and most satisfying aspect of my association with our staff and our members.

What a pleasure it has been to work with Karin Derkacz, Tess Hill, Bill Warfield, Kathy Green and, most recently, Bob Terwall and Stephanie Tierney! They are consummate professionals who never say "no" when asked to do *anything and everything* for ERA. And, like me, they genuinely enjoy working with each other and on behalf of our members. I am deeply grateful to them, and I trust you are too.

Over my years with ERA, the family has, of course, also included too many memorable relationships with members to recount here. It has always been remarkable to me that

so many talented members have continually stepped up into leadership positions and given so much of their time and expertise to this organization. I've worked with countless executive committees, board delegates, committees, task forces, chapter leaders and other volunteers who seemed to have extra energy when it came to giving their best to ERA. Thanks to all for your unselfish service!

Our ERA family also includes many multi-generation rep firms, an unusual phenomenon in the association world.

I've had the privilege to know and work with several generations of the same families, and I consider ERA unique because it has this strength of history among its rep members.

While I'm doling out my thanks, allow me to note that my wife Lorene and daughter Meaghan have marvelous memories of ERA events they've attended. They've both assisted the staff at ERA conferences and trade shows, and they've

attended various industry meetings where they've become friends with many of our members as well as our industry partners. So please add their appreciation to mine for the gracious way they have always been welcomed.

Finally ... my special thanks to my dear friends, Ray Hall and Jess Spoonts, for bringing me into the ERA family so long ago. It's been a great ride, and I'm so glad I "stuck around" that week in London!

In the next issue of The Representor, this space will be turned over to ERA's new CEO, Walter Tobin. I have known Walt for a number of years, and I believe he is an ideal choice to lead ERA into the future. He has a long history in our industry and with many of our members. For those of you who have not yet met him, I hope you have that opportunity very soon. I also urge every member to provide your input and to say "yes" when Walt asks for your assistance.

Congratulations, Walt ... and welcome to the ERA family!



by Thomas J. Shanahan
e: tjshanahan2@gmail.com

In all these years, the one indelible impression I've had of ERA is that it is a FAMILY. This has been, by far, the most rewarding and most satisfying aspect of my association with our staff and our members.

FEATURE ARTICLE: Introducing ... ERA's new CEO, Walter E. Tobin

(continued from page 10)

They are a major new audience because ERA can take a leadership role in teaching the European electronics industry about the North American rep model. Asia should be another prime market for us.

To help with the membership initiative, I want to go to manufacturers who sell through reps and ask for testimonials that we'll post on our website. And I also want to talk to manufacturers who sell direct or are thinking of going direct to present the value of the rep model. I know a lot of top manufacturers whom I believe will give me an hour to discuss the rep model.

Third, I want to look at adding new products and services to our member portfolio.

Fourth, I hope to broaden the sharing of best practices across the ERA membership. That, along with new products and services, will enhance our value proposition.

Q: What are the most important challenges you see ERA facing now and in the near future?

General consolidation in the industry is a major challenge, and more recently, consolidations of suppliers and rep firms are having a big impact. Many reps are now covering multiple territories.

Another challenge for reps is reduced commission rates (*see both From the Top and From the Association Round Table in this issue*)

while having to deal with the doing-more-with-less phenomenon. Reps are also adding a lot of expense to their operations to meet the demands of their principals for non-selling services, and their bottom lines are being significantly affected. So perhaps ERA can help our members move into new products and services that could help balance or reverse those revenue losses.

Q: What do you want ERA members to know about you that hasn't already been mentioned?

I believe strong supplier relationships are vital to reaffirming and broadening the rep business model. I am passionate about the rep profession, and I am determined to do what is right for ERA members. I am here to serve them.

This is a great opportunity, and I want to build on what Tom Shanahan and Bob Terwall have done. I want to listen and learn, and I am committed to success. ■

To contact Walter Tobin, send email to wtobin@era.org, or call him at 617-901-4088.

This article was written by Tess Hill, editor of The Representor.

Customer Relationship Management for the Electronics Industry

- Easily update your Principals' CRM
- Opportunity Management
- Lead Management
- AccountManager Mobile for iPad®
- Design Win Commission Management
- **DIAMOND SPONSOR**
2016 ERA Conference

Visit www.empoweringsystems.com
to see our New Demonstrations



Empowering Systems
Automate · Collaborate · Innovate

sales@empoweringsystems.com

888-297-2750

There's good news on two fronts this fall for both ERA and reps

Summer is waning as this column is written, and fall is around the corner. For many of us, the change in season is welcome. As change comes to the weather, so has change come to the ERA.

Over this last summer, the ERA Executive Committee and our Search Committee have been very busy looking for and hiring a new CEO. I am extremely pleased to announce that our new CEO is Walter Tobin. Walter took the helm on Sept. 14, assuming the responsibilities previously held by Tom Shanahan and Bob Terwall.

Thanks to Tom and Bob for all of the great work they have done these past years.

They have agreed to stay on and help Walter on an as-needed basis. Thanks also to our Search Committee of rep members, ably chaired by our former chairman, Mark Conley. Please make plans to attend and meet Walter at our next conference in Austin, Tex., this coming February. (See the interview with Walter Tobin elsewhere in this issue.)

There's another piece of great news to report. A well-known major semiconductor manufacturer has raised its rep commission percentage across the board for all new business. One of the reps present on the conference call for the announcement summarized (in his words, not the manufacturer's) the reasons for the move.

Quite frankly these stated reasons are really nothing new. The only thing that is new is that it finally seems that what has always been clear to the rep community is now becoming more clear to at least one enlightened semiconductor manufacturer. We can only hope that this change was noticed by other suppliers. We should all do what is necessary to help our manufacturers understand our roles and the distribution channel's roles and the inherent differences therein.

If we do this correctly, they will come to realize the value proposition that reps in fact have always brought to the table. Then hopefully they too will see the light and make the necessary adjustments to their pay plans to help ensure that reps can remain viable in these challenging financial times.

Listed here are some, but not all, of the reasons from our rep's perspective for the manufacturer's move.

1) The manufacturer wants and needs more of the reps' attention.

2) The reps are laser-focused on the non-competing lines they sell.

3) The reps and the manufacturers' inside personnel handle the critical CRM function.

4) The reps are responsible for submitting clean reports for both their direct accounts and for updating distributors' opportunities.

5) The reps are primarily responsible for account penetration strategies and execution in their territories.

6) Suppliers look to reps to manage their distribution programs in their respective markets, and that responsibility should be reflected in the reps' compensation.

This is just a sampling of the compelling reasons for this welcome commission adjustment. Rest assured this change has not gone unnoticed, and there may be more to come.

Please take the time to fully embrace these issues, and then take the opportunity to express them, if appropriate, at your next QBR or other review. If we can better educate our principals and thereby thoroughly differentiate ourselves from the distribution channel, our future as reps will be bright.



by Dan Parks, CPMR
West Electronic Sales
ERA President
e: dan@westelec.com

There's another piece of great news to report. A well-known major semiconductor manufacturer has raised its rep commission percentage across the board for all new business.

ERA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES PROGRAM UPDATES

The ERA Conference Committee has announced additions to the program of the 47th Management and Marketing Conference, scheduled from the evening of Feb. 28 through the afternoon of March 1, 2016, at the University of Texas AT&T Conference Center in Austin. The keynote presentation, “Smart Solutions: Navigating the Connected World,” featuring author and consultant Scott Klososky, was previously reported. Now also on the agenda in general sessions for all attendees are: Michael Knight, senior vice president, TTI Americas, who will speak on distribution trends and their impacts on the industry; John Mayhall, senior director of sales solutions, LinkedIn, who will profile his company’s Sales Navigator and its uses in social selling; Dale Ford, vice president and chief analyst, IHS Technology, who will discuss overall industry projections; Sandy Lincoln, chief market strategist, BMO Asset Management U.S., who will present an economic forecast; and Walter Tobin, ERA’s new CEO, who will focus on millennials, including how to work with, buy from and sell to the younger generations.

In keeping with the conference theme, “Smart Solutions: Navigating the Connected World,” the breakout seminars will include sessions devoted to: creating custom applications for tablets and smartphones; harnessing hardware for maximum performance; digital marketing; how reps are creating their own software; human resource guidelines for all electronic messaging; optimizing websites; coping with “connection overload;” the legal issues related to data ownership; and more. Details about the conference, including online registration forms and sponsorship information, are available at era.org.

MRERF REPORTS HIRING OF NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Manufacturers’ Representatives Educational Research Foundation (MRERF) recently reported the appointment of a new executive director. Liz Beerman comes to the foundation with extensive experience in sales, education and training. She was with Arrow Electronics for 11 years where her responsibilities ranged from product management and marketing to creating and delivering customized training programs. Following her stint at Arrow, Beerman spent almost 10 years at the KLA Group where she designed, delivered and implemented training programs worldwide, the majority of which were for Hewlett-Packard.

Susannah Hart, who has been serving as MRERF’s interim executive director, says, “I am so excited to welcome Liz to the MRERF team. She is a perfect fit ... and will be a great leader for the future of the organization and its programs.”

MRERF is the non-profit foundation established by ERA in the 1980s. It offers professional certification for manufacturers’ reps and their salespeople as well as courses for manufacturers who sell through reps. For details on MRERF’s upcoming programs, visit mrerf.org.

IHS PUBLISHES WHITE PAPER ON CLOUD EXPANSION ISSUES

The newest white paper from IHS Technology, the research and analysis firm, focuses on the “cloud” and its unprecedented opportunities as well as security concerns and supply chain uncertainty tied to the rapid expansion of cloud usage. The publication is available for free download from the website at electronics360.globalspec.com. Subscriptions to a free weekly electronics industry newsletter are also offered on that site.

MORE WORKERS COULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR OVERTIME PAY IN 2016

The Obama Administration recently announced plans to expand overtime pay eligibility in 2016 for about 5 million American workers now classified as “managers” or “professionals.” The Chicago law firm of Howe and Hutton reports that, under the proposal, workers earning less than \$970 weekly would no longer be considered “managers” or “professionals” and would therefore be eligible for time-and-a-half pay for hours in excess of 40 per week. Howe and Hutton notes that this may not be the only change in overtime eligibility coming as the Labor Department is said to be considering further changes in the regulatory definition of “manager.”

FIND YOUR LOST ANDROID PHONE USING GOOGLE SEARCH

Google announced this past summer that Android phone users can find a lost phone by using the Google search feature. Be sure to sign in to the same Google account on your desktop computer as you have on your phone. Then just open the Google search engine, and type “find my phone.” You will be shown a map with the last known location of the phone.

What I've learned about the impacts of rep commission cuts

Elsewhere in this issue, ERA President Dan Parks, CPMR, speaks in his "From the Top" column about a recent event whereby a notable semiconductor manufacturer announced an increase in the commission rate paid to its representative sales organizations. If you haven't read that yet, I encourage you to do so as I'd like to weigh in on this development from the manufacturer's viewpoint. You may know that I was a principal for 30+ years, most of that time in our exciting industry.

In a word, I'm encouraged by this move. For lots of reasons and for a long time, rep commission revenue has been on the decline. Unit price reductions in our electronics industry, globalization driving "split" commissions, reduced rates on major accounts and/or legacy business of some certain age and other events have contributed to steadily declining income for rep firms — what is called the "effective commission rate." My experience is, if the contractual percentage to be paid is 5 percent, it is not unusual for the effective rate to be half that, and the same is true for other contracted rates, whether they be 3, 7 or others.

Truth be told, I was a bit dismissive of this trend for a while. My attitude was that the challenge of our industry these days is for us all to do more with less. Moore's law, continual price reductions and other demands ask us all to run faster and jump higher.

Over time, however, I've been "enlightened" by seeing countless instances in which a rep firm has grown top-line revenue for a principal by a doubling or more and is being paid less than half of the previous commission dollars for it. Add to that some dramatic and unavoidable increases in representatives' costs, with employee benefits first on that list, and I've been concerned for some time about the financial viability of many rep firms in today's market. So this recognition from at least one manufacturer, albeit a big one, gives me hope.

Again, from a manufacturer's perspective,

What I've learned is that commission cuts WILL have their downsides — maybe not immediately, but all very real and often dramatic.

let me share some of my own lessons learned on this critical component of sales force compensation. I've spent more time than I'd care to admit poring over income statements, trying to "make the quarter." (For about half my career, we were a privately-held entity, and for an equal time we were publicly traded. While I hate to admit it, when you are publicly-

traded, those quarterly analyst calls do affect your decisions.) You review the income statements for major pockets, and often the "commissions paid" line is a rich target.

Here's the point. You ask yourself, "Where can I cut with minimal negative impacts?" You can convince yourself that a commission cut is tolerable for the rep sales force. It won't have repercussions, particularly in the near-term. We've earned "emotional favorite" status, so

we will be okay for a while.

What I've learned is that commission cuts WILL have their downsides — maybe not immediately, but still very real and often dramatic. This is more so the case as margins for all partners skinny down, and we all operate at maximum efficiency or not at all. A big problem is that reps won't tell a principal what they won't be doing due to their reduced income. They can't, in many instances, because the politics prevent it, but that doesn't make the repercussions any less real.

Said another way, when reviewing that income statement, it was pretty easy for me to identify what new product projects I'd have to table if I cut the engineering budget. Similarly, I could pinpoint what the costs and pain would be if I delayed that enterprise resource planning initiative or killed the investment planned for newer, faster automation. While less easy to pinpoint or identify what won't get done if I cut commissions, the impacts are no less real and no less dramatic.

That's not to say commissions are a sacred cow and therefore untouchable. Particularly as

(continued on next page)



by Robert G. Terwall
e: rterwall@wi.rr.com

COVER STORY: Company improvements

(continued from page 7)

that his firm “swapped out a couple of lines,” resulting in “increased activity and a better product mix for our customers.”

At Repworks, also in New England, Ted Curtin, CPMR, replied that his firm both dropped and added lines this year. He notes, “We evaluated our product lines and found three that, while bringing in income, required more sales and reporting time than their income warranted. We resigned them, refocused our efforts on our more profitable lines and enjoyed good sales increases as a result.”

As for new lines, he says, “We attended a different industry trade show ... and found a product line not normally carried by reps but that has the same traditional customers we call on. This changes our direction slightly and puts us into a more profitable arena.”

“We attended a different industry trade show ... and found a product line not normally carried by reps but that has the same traditional customers we call on. This changes our direction slightly and puts us into a more profitable arena.”

— Ted Curtin, CPMR

The results of these moves have been positive in several ways. Curtin explains, “We are improving sales on our remaining lines. More importantly, we have reduced the stress levels of our inside and outside staff by eliminating many nuisances and unreasonable demands from the lines we resigned. We are enjoying a different perspective from our customers ... bringing them new technologies and techniques that ease their burdens.” And looking ahead, he adds, “If we continue to grow the new, non-traditional lines we just took on, we will push further into this new direction and abandon some of the more commodity-driven product lines we have represented in the past.”

Chuck Tanzola’s firm has also both dropped and added lines in 2015. “We have added some synergistic/niche products to our line card as well as terminating relationships with some principals that were either not profitable for the organization or did not fit with our strategic direction,” he describes. “We have also expanded geographic responsibilities with several of our existing principals.”

The final input on principal-related changes comes from Mark Myers. “We just kicked off a more structured new line evaluation program,” he reports. “We have formed a committee whose responsibility is to create a set of criteria a new line has to meet to be considered. We are reaching out to more customers before signing a line to get feedback on the viability of the line ... It’s all about continuous improvement.”

And “continuous improvement” is obviously a focus of all the rep tributed to this article. On behalf of all readers who “borrow” one or more of these ideas for their own firms, many thanks to all! ■

This article was written by Tess Hill, editor of The Representor.

ASSOCIATION ROUND TABLE: Commission cuts

(continued from page 15)

accounts grow, a reduced rate that still generates meaningful dollars to the sales force is appropriate. And, in my experience, a collaborative discussion on this, often initiated by solid rep firm partners, will yield the best long-term results for all.

I don’t know the identity of the semiconductor company that Dan references, but I applaud its approach. In essence, the company’s attitude is to avoid reviewing rep commissions (or direct sales force costs) as a cost-of-selling event on the income statement and instead look at commissions as an investment for which a return is expected. The result? A greater investment will yield a larger return. ■

ERA MEMBERS

SAVE

UP TO

34%

ON UPS®

SHIPPING!

members who con-

CALL: 1-800-MEMBERS (1-800-636-2377)



Death, disability, retirement: Putting the success in succession planning

When independent sales representatives get together to network in either a public or private forum, the discussion often turns to, "What happens to my agency in the event of my death, disability or retirement? What is the best way to retire without hurting my employees, principals, customers and other important industry relationships?"

Many middle-aged sales reps start to think about death, disability, retirement and succession planning. Beyond middle-age, the internal light bulb starts to flicker just a little, and as time passes it glows brighter and brighter until the need to take the bold step toward succession planning is fully illuminated. It is never too early to start.

Succession planning is important not only to reps, but to their key employees, principals and customers. The founder of the rep agency working hard to leave something for the family needs a plan in place if "something happens." What happens if the rep/founder becomes sick, gets in an automobile accident or needs to take time off to address a family emergency or other crisis? The future is unknown.

It would be a disservice to key employees who are hardworking, dedicated, ambitious and have all the outstanding qualities and loyalties of a successful team member not to make them aware of where their future lies. Who can blame them for wanting to know, wanting to get ahead? Most organizations, no matter how large or small, need an heir apparent in place. Valued employees without a clear idea of what the future holds often leave for better opportunities.

Succession planning is equally important to principals. It is a frequently discussed issue among principals vested in the continued success and viability of the sales agency and who have an interest in its continuity. Principals who are familiar with working with rep agencies and who are comfortable with the rep's personnel will respect the rep who is careful enough to plan for the future.

Questions to be answered

When considering succession planning, a rep agency must ask the basic questions: "What are we selling? What is the buyer buying?" The agency typically has no inventory, little equipment and no long-term contracts. The agency's income is speculative, 30-day contracts are the norm, and future commissions are unknown. One of the agency's most valuable assets is its goodwill, the ability to make a profit. This asset

is comprised of the team that has been built, the brand that has been nurtured and promoted, the principals, customers and employees that have been trained and educated.

The succession plan or plan to transition the agency will most often involve existing co-owners, whether they are partners, co-shareholders or members of a limited liability company, and employees. Key employees and co-owners are the most logical and qualified persons to succeed in the agency.

Other likely possibilities include outside merger/acquisition partners. Those outside partners might be existing rep agencies who value the synergy of the competitor's business. Another rep will appreciate the success achieved in a similar or related industry and in a similar or adjacent territory. Likewise, another industry player will recognize the similar goals, objectives and work ethic of a rival. It is also possible that an outside partner may be someone the owner knows in the industry who is looking to acquire an agency, perhaps to expand the territory, to expand his or her firm's lines or to just build a larger organization.

Steps to be followed

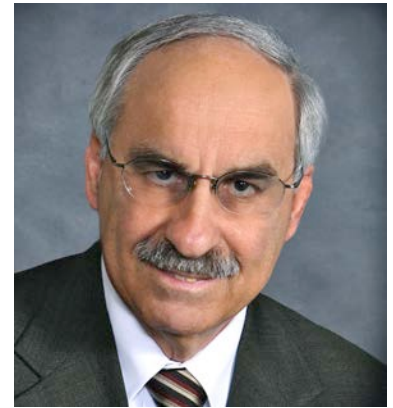
There are four basic steps to developing a succession plan:

1. Due diligence by the buyer;
2. Determining the value, purchase price and terms of payment;
3. Structuring the transaction; and
4. Preparing the necessary legal documents and conditions of the sale.

With respect to due diligence, the parties will customarily sign a mutual non-disclosure agreement so the transaction will be kept confidential. The buyer wants to be protected against outside bidders. The seller does not want its employees, customers, principals or competitors to be aware that it is considering putting the agency on the market. All parties need to be protected from disclosure and improper use of the confidential information shared in the course of negotiating and implementing the succession plan.

The buyer will want to review the seller's financial statements, line card and any building leases and other agreements with employees and sub-reps. The buyer will be looking for upswings and down trends in the business, sources of income, percentage of revenue from top lines, etc. It will be important for the buyer to review each of the seller's rep agreements to determine if a

(continued on page 29)



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 them at gerald.newman@sfnr.com or adam.glazer@sfnr.com.



Adam Glazer

A book review and recommendation by Dan Beaulieu

Be Your Customer's Hero: Real World Tips and Techniques for the Service Front Lines

by Adam Toporek

Copyright: 2015 by Amacom

Price: \$17.95 • 244 pages with index

A much needed new book on customer service!

Even though there are plenty of books on customer service these days, I find this one to be particularly ground-breaking because the author, Adam Toporek, gets right to the heart of the problem. And yes, he does it openly and honestly. No, the customer is not always right, he admits, while teaching us how to get our point across while making the customer feel that he *is* right.

In fact, in chapter 10, called "All Customers Are Irrational," he points out that most of the time, customers don't really know what they want. He notes that even though yes, customers are irrational, they are predictably irrational. It is up to us, those who sell to them, to figure out their individual needs and meet them.



Another section I found helpful was chapter 39 where he talks about being your customers' detective. Whatever a customer wants, find it for him or her. No matter what it is, whether you sell it or not, find it. Remember that your job is to provide your customers with what they need at all times. Remember that story about Nordstrom's taking back a set of snow tires even though, of course, the store did not sell tires? Man, I hope that story is true! But the point is that we are still telling that story. I have read that story in many books and articles, and it makes the point, doesn't it?

And finally, one great example from the book, and probably the most important, is in chapter 40 where Mr. Toporek advises us to never talk badly about customers ... to customers. I say a big giant "amen" to that. And I'll add that you should never ever talk badly about your customers period, never mind just for other customers.

This leads me to the most important advice in the entire book — that customer service starts at the top. It starts with the owner and goes all the way through the organization. As a company leader, the last thing you want to do is talk badly about a customer. Because you are the leader in your firm, everything you say is multiplied by 10. So if you start knocking your customers, you are giving all of your associates tacit approval to follow your lead to join in the "we hate the customers" dance. That's the last thing you want. Customer service is not just the responsibility of your customer service people, but rather it belongs to everyone in the company ... everyone.

This is a great subject and a great book. Read it and learn.

Dan Beaulieu is the president and founder of D.B. Management L.L.C., 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 danbeaulieu@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.

ERA Member Service Action Lines

Amazon.com	era.org
(Click the link on the Member Services page.)	
Avis Car Rental	era.org
(Click the link on the Member Services page.)	
Budde Marketing	708-301-2111
	buddemarketing.com
Empowering Systems	888-297-2750
	empoweringsystems.com
ERA Customized Survey Service	era.org
(Click the link on the Member Services page.)	
ERA Strategic Planning Service	rterwall@era.org
ERA Teleforum Audio Library	era.org
ERA University (online courses)	era.org
EYOND: MRSware	866-795-8386
	mrsware.com
Hertz Car Rental	era.org
(Click the link on the Member Services page.)	
JJM Search	402-721-6590
	jjmsearch.com
MRERF (CPMR/CSP programs)	mrrerf.org
Office Depot	era.org
(Click the link on the Member Services page.)	
Perfection Data	perfectiondata.com
RepCare insurance	888-243-0174
Rembrandt Advantage	800-292-7182
	rembrandtadvantage.com
RPMS software	800-776-7435
	rpms.com
UPS shipping	era.org
(Click the link on the Member Services page.)	

Consultants Available for Expert Access

Accounting & Taxes: Stan Herzog	847-564-1040
Executive Searches: Carla Mahrt	402-721-6590
Field Sales: Ray Hall	419-957-6354
Insurance: John Doyle	888-243-0174
Legal: Gerald Newman	312-648-2300
Rep Network Mgmt.: Jim Hartranft	262-945-9200

Other ERA Services & Publications

(Call 312-419-1432 or go to era.org.)

- Locator Online Directory of Manufacturers' Reps
- Lines Available/Hot Lines Services
- Guidelines for: Becoming a Successful Rep; Establishing and Benefiting from Rep Councils; Agreements between Sales Reps and Manufacturers; Agreements between Stocking Reps and Manufacturers; Agreements between Reps and Sub-Reps; Agreements between a Rep Firm and Its Salespeople; Evaluating a Prospective Principal; Evaluating a Prospective Rep; Developing New Markets with Professional Field Sales Reps
- Line Portfolio Evaluation
- Outsourced Field Sales: Adding Value for the Customer (CD)
- Outsourcing Field Sales (Fortune Magazine Reprint)
- The Value of Outsourced Field Sales (EBN Reprint)
- Selling Through Manufacturers' Representatives
- ERA Code of Ethics
- ERA Commitment to Performance (Information and Certificates)
- 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
- Manufacturer Membership (Roster and Information)
- Principal Information Exchange (P.I.E.)
- ERA Membership Pins

ERA Meetings & Programs

- Board of Directors Meetings (Next Meeting: Oct. 30, 2015)
- ERA Conference - Feb. 28 - March 1, 2016

How and why we should all stop multi-tasking

During a conference call with the executive team of a rep firm, I decided to send an email to another customer. I know, I know. You'd think I would have learned. What could go wrong?

First I sent the customer the message. Then I sent him another one with the attachment I had forgotten to append. In my third email, I explained why the attachment he received wasn't the one he was expecting. When I eventually refocused on the call, I realized I hadn't heard a crucial question.

Multi-tasking makes you stupid.

I swear I wasn't smoking anything, but apparently I was acting as if I had. A recent study has shown that IQs drop by 10 points in people who are distracted by email and phone calls. That's more than twice the effect of smoking marijuana.

We're only fooling ourselves when we think we get more done by doing several things at once. In reality, new research shows that our productivity can decline by up to 40 percent. We don't actually multi-task; we switch-task, rapidly shifting from one activity to another, interrupting ourselves and losing time.

You might think you're different and that you have multi-tasked so much you're an expert. But you'd be wrong. Recent findings show that heavy multi-taskers are less competent at doing several things at once than light multi-taskers. The more you multi-task, the worse you are at it.

An experiment in non-multi-tasking

I decided to do an experiment. For one week I would not multi-task and see what happened. When I was on the phone, I would only talk or listen. In a meeting I would only concentrate on the meeting. I didn't think I could sustain that kind of focus, but it turns out I was pretty successful, at least most of the time.

During the week I discovered six new ways of looking at the world:

1. The experience was delightful. When you stop checking for email, you stay in closer touch with your surroundings. I noticed this phenomenon especially with my teenage sons. Normally I feel they don't want to interact with me much, given how uncool I am. However, I was surprised to notice how often they initiated a conversation when I wasn't constantly responding to the email ping.

2. I made significant progress on challenging projects. I usually try to distract myself from work that requires thought and persistence, such

as writing and strategizing. However, without distractions, I was able to plow through the uncomfortable times and overcome the blocks.

3. My stress dropped dramatically. Research shows that multi-tasking isn't just inefficient, it's stressful. I can vouch for the stress factor. I felt liberated from the strain of keeping so many balls in the air, and I experienced a sense of accomplishment when I finished one task before going on to the next.

4. I lost all patience with time-wasting activities. An hour-long meeting seemed interminable, and a meandering conversation was excruciating. I focused my attention like a laser beam on my list and quickly burned through the "to-do's."

5. I had tremendous patience for enjoyable activities. I was in no rush to end conversations with my customers, and my mind stayed focused when I was brainstorming about a difficult issue.

6. Single-tasking has no downside. No one became frustrated with me for not answering a call or failing to return an email the second I received it.

Why don't we all just stop multi-tasking?

So, why not use all your brain's energy to listen to a prospect on the phone while booking a trip to Paris online? Sounds good, except the brain is already working at capacity when you're doing just one task. It is picking up conversational nuances or thinking about what you've just heard. Ask it to take on a second or third task, and you take away its ability to deal fully with the first one.

How do we resist the temptation? Turn the distractions off. I often write and plan at 6:30 a.m. Following my successful experiment, I continue to leave my cell phone and email off just in case a multi-tasker is trying to reach me. I turn my car phone off too. ... sometimes. (Other single-task warriors I know leave their cell phones in the trunk.)

Use your impatience constructively. So you're itchy without all the ring tones and email pings to answer. Fill that void by creating unrealistically short deadlines. Give yourself a third of the time you think you need to accomplish a task. There's nothing like a deadline to fully occupy your brain. If you have only 30 minutes to finish a presentation, you're not going to take a call or flip back an email.

Ironically, single-tasking to meet a tight deadline will reduce your stress, and it just might help you to be more productive.



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 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



MANUFACTURERS: For maximum productivity and performance, let the professional field sales firms of **MICHIGAN ERA** take your product to market.

C C Electro

Matthew Cohen, CPMR
matt_cohen@ccrep.com
734-455-0000

Milsk Co., Inc.

Charles L. Milsk
mbrown@milskco.com
248-354-3310

Jay Marketing Associates

Dan Jakubowski
djakubowski@jaymktg.com
734-459-1200

Mike Pecar Sales, L.L.C.

Michael Pecar, CPMR
mpecar@mikepecarsales.com
248-608-2660

Mike McAuliffe Sales Inc.

Mike McAuliffe
mmcauliffe@mcauliffesales.com
248-545-7177

TMC - Technology Marketing Corporation

Matt Folk, CPMR
mfolk@tmcc.com
248-592-0814

R. C. Merchant & Co., Inc.

J. Brook Merchant, CPMR
bmerchant@rcmerchant.com
248-476-4600

R. O. Whitesell & Assoc.

Brad Thinnes, CPMR
Brad_Thinnes@whitesell.com
248-348-5454

For information about **MICHIGAN ERA**,
contact Matt Cohen, CPMR, at 734-455-0000 or matt_cohen@ccrep.com.

New for 2015: The tax code doesn't get easier!

Members of Congress always talk about simplifying the tax code. But when they get a chance, they complicate it more every time. While unable to reach an agreement on almost anything, they managed to pass a law that no one will like. They began by wanting to raise some revenue. But how could they do it and still claim they didn't raise taxes? Why, increase penalties! No one should ever do the wrong tax thing, so they should pay for their mistakes. While an interesting theory, the fact is that there were already penalties for practically every conceivable wrongdoing.

So they have now matched minor indiscretions with draconian penalties. They went after businesses that are required to file 1099s, K-1 forms and W-2s. I doubt that there's a business that doesn't have at least one of these items. About four years ago, Congress raised the penalties for failing to file one of these from \$50 to \$100. They just raised the figure to \$250 per omitted 1099. They didn't stop there. The penalty increases to \$500 if the omission was intentional. There are maximum penalties for law breakers who omit filing, say 5,000 forms 1099. The maximum penalty was \$250,000; it is now \$1,500,000!

Tis is enough incentive that the IRS could well start looking for omissions on audit; it could be easy money. So businesspeople, and that includes owners filing a Schedule C with their regular tax returns as well as rental property owners filing a Schedule E, should set up a record-keeping system to keep track of people who should receive a 1099. This involves their names, Social Security numbers and addresses. Any individual or partnership providing business services to a business that is paid more than \$600 per year must be provided a form 1099-MISC. With the exception of a law firm, corporations are excluded from the filing requirements. Forms are due at the IRS by Feb. 28 of each year.

A number of important changes to due dates for tax returns were also passed. Beginning in 2017 for the year 2016, partnership returns will be due March 15 instead of April 1. This was supposed to make it easier for taxpayers to get their form K-1s in time to prepare their personal returns. But, in fact, most partnerships were having a hard time filing by April 15, so the new date will alleviate

their pressure; they won't even try to make the due date. The extended due date remains the same, Sept. 15.

All corporations used to be due by March 15. That due date will remain for S-corporations, but regular corporations will have until April 15 beginning with tax year 2016. All extensions for all of these returns generally come due on Sept. 15. But, as special dispensation, trust returns (form 1041) will now get an extension to Sept. 30. Why be uniform when an opportunity arises to boggle the mind?

Onward to a problem that the IRS recognized as serious, thought about and then came to a conclusion. Hacking has become a major problem. Many firms and organizations, including the IRS, have come to the aid of hacking victims by voluntarily providing security protection for them for a period of time. The IRS states that the fair market value of such services would normally be taxable income to the recipient victims. In view of their torment, the IRS has agreed that they would not tax the victims on that income. Isn't that nice of the IRS? I wonder what the repercussions would have been if the IRS charged the taxpayers for protection, the cause of which was the hacking of their own information. I am concerned about the mindset of the IRS to even conceive of that as income.

Congress also passed a law changing the technical definition of "gross income" regarding the right of the IRS to extend the statute of limitation. Normally the IRS has three years from the due date (or extended due date) of filing a return to charge a tax deficiency. If gross income has been understated by more than 25 percent, the statute is extended to six years. There once was a taxpayer who accurately recorded the sales price, but grossly overstated the cost of the item, part of a program the IRS has sarcastically labeled "Son of BOSS." The IRS missed the three-year period for assessing the taxpayer, so it claimed that the cost was an integral part of gross income, and they should be allowed to persecute.

The Supreme Court ruled that gross income means "before deductions," so cost has nothing to do with "gross." Congress has therefore changed the definition of "gross" in the tax code to mean "gross less the cost of sale" for purposes of the six-year extension.



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.



The professional field sales firm members of
Florida-Sunshine ERA
know **YOUR** markets and **YOUR** customers!

To discover all the value ERA members bring to YOUR company,
contact one of these focused-on-quality rep firms.

CBC Electronics, Inc.
Contact: William Keikes
bill@cbcelectronics.net
352-735-2242

CBX Electronics, Inc.
Contact: Pat Walsh
jpw@cbxelectronics.com
407-774-9100

Coaxial Systems Associates
Contact: Bill Alexander
bill@coaxialsystems.com
561-744-6399

Conley & Associates, Inc.
Contact: Mark Dietrich
mdietrich@conleyrep.com
407-365-3283

Cornerstone Technical Sales
Contact: Doug Martell
doug@ctsrep.com
727-789-4802

Current Solutions
Contact: Al Johnson, Jr., CPMR
aljr@currentsolutions.com
813-996-1922

EIR, Inc.
Contact: Brian McClannahan
bmclann@eir.com
407-332-6650

Graham Performance Tech, LLC
Contact: Art Scornavacca, Jr.
art@gptrep.com
321-504-1042

HHP Associates, Inc.
Contact: Barry Farber
bfarber@hhpai.com
407-468-0841

PANAMTECH, Inc.
Contact: Ric Carreras
carreras@panamtech.com
954-587-3769

Phoenix Components, LLC
Contact: Rick Tally, CPMR
phnixhqs@cfl.rr.com
321-723-4414

Precision Marketing Services
Contact: Joe Penna
joe.penna@precision-marketing.com
954-752-1700

South Atlantic Component Sales
Contact: Keith Bonucchi, CPMR
kbonucchi@sacs-rep.com
813-855-6542

Sun Rep
Contact: Brian Gunnin
bgunnin@sunrep.com
813-884-4805

Sunland Associates
Contact: Rick Callinan, CPMR
rickcallinan@sunlandrep.com
407-365-9533

Florida-Sunshine ERA is the proud sponsor of the
annual Florida DTAM data collection and reporting project,
annual scholarship awards to member firms and many educational programs.
For details on the association and its members, go to

floridaera.org

Every salesperson needs these seven tools for success today

Throughout history people have used tools to get the job done. Better tools give a competitive advantage. Innovative tools leapfrog you ahead of the competition.

Today, technology and the tools that come with it provide such an enormous leap that we wouldn't think of competing in business without them. Here are seven tools for success that can give today's salesperson the advantage in a hotly-competitive market.

1) A useful (and regularly-used!) CRM

The contact relationship management tool you use will greatly affect how you connect and ultimately succeed. You want the tool that gives you immediate access to important contact information, but even more, gives you access to important facts. You're scheduled to meet with Mary at 1 p.m. You talked with her last year, but her company wasn't ready to move forward. Now they are, and she called to set up the meeting. By the way, what are her three kids' names? You know she told you about them last year. You need a CRM that allows you to first enter that information quickly and the ability to recall it quickly. Salesforce.com is a popular CRM as is SugarCRM. I'm using Nimble.com and love it!

2) A video creation tool and knowledge of how to use it

We live in a world of video. YouTube is a necessity for searching and learning. You should have the ability to create quick videos for communication with prospects and customers. It makes the connection more human, more real, and it helps in the buying process. Usually a quick video shot on your smart-phone that is uploaded to YouTube (get the app) can be saved as an unlisted video so only your customer sees it. I use a tool called Eyejot which lets me send a video email. Find a tool that is easy to use and helps you stand out.

3) Evernote

Yes, we've heard about this brilliant tool a lot. If you don't have it, what are you waiting for? Get it. Use it. Store all kinds of paper there but don't forget you can also make quick audio notes. Take audio notes after

a meeting so you'll remember Mary's kids' names better next time (see #1).

4) Fast access to the Net

Have the ability to get to the Net fast when you're on the road. That means having LTE speed on the road. I use not one, but two carriers in the U.S. so if I'm in an area where one is weak, I can try the other. Yes, Wi-Fi is preferred, but it is not always available. Prepare in advance by assuming one system will be down. Prepare in advance for the most likely adverse scenarios.

5) Backup batteries for your smart-phone and tablet

This has become an essential tool for salespeople on the go. Yes, your battery can and will go dead at the most inconvenient time. Carry extras (yes, plural). Added bonus: One of the coolest things you can do for people sitting next to you at a conference is hand them a battery charger if you see their phone has died. You'll have a friend for life!

6) Client-connection tools

Think through what tools you need uniquely in your work to connect with clients. Some of these could include an extra phone, keyboards for typing or whatever it takes to connect in whatever condition exists. Do the hard work. Think it thorough in advance, and be prepared.

7) Learning fast

One of the most important skills you can acquire in a fast-changing world is the ability to learn how to learn fast. This means reading fast. It also means memorizing well.

Another critical skill is learning how to read people fast. Find out what they like and don't like. Match their style, and you'll be seen as a resource.

These are some tools for success which can help you to gain an advantage. What tools have helped you and are your "must have" tools today? Please share this article with your friends and share with me on Facebook and Twitter. I look forward to hearing from you!



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.



Chapter News reports the local activities of the 20 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

Carolinas ERA held networking breakfasts both in August in Charlotte and in September in Raleigh. The next networking breakfast is Oct. 9 in Charlotte. Also in September, the chapter sponsored a program titled, "What You Should Know about NCSU's ASSIST Nanosystems Center."

CHICAGOLAND - WISCONSIN

Chicagoland-Wisconsin hosted its fourth annual all-industry baseball outing in August at Chicago's Wrigley Field. More than 100 reps, distributors, manufacturers, customers and other guests attended.

EMPIRE STATE

Members and guests teed off in Empire State's 11th annual Debbie Henry Memorial Scholarship Golf Tournament in August. More than 80 golfers and 100 total attendees participated. At the event, the chapter raised funds for cancer research and awarded two scholarships to college students who are dependents of members reps and distributors. The group also honored Dave Modafferi of L. D. Allen for his many years of service as a chapter officer.

INDIANA - KENTUCKY

The chapter hosted its annual industry golf outing at the Golf Club of Indiana in August. The tournament drew more than 60 golfers.

NEW YORK

In early June, a New York ERA dinner program featured an industry panel composed of a contract manufacturer, a distributor and a rep. Their discussion covered the changing

playing field for component sales, how to work together to improve profitability and predictions for the future.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

On Sept. 10, a joint event was slated for members of both the Manufacturers' Agents National Association (MANA) and Northern California ERA. The program topic was "Stop Wasting Your Time and Your Money on Your Worst Lines." The speaker was Charles Cohon, CPMR, the CEO of MANA.

OHIO

Ohio ERA's most recent event was held Sept. 11 at the Montgomery Inn in Cincinnati. The program was co-sponsored with the Manufacturers' Agents of Cincinnati (MAC).

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Pacific Northwest members came together in mid-September for a charity golf tournament in Aloha, Ore. The money raised was used to purchase a computer for a college-bound foster child through Project Lemonade.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Southern Cal ERA had a busy summer, starting with the 12th Annual Summer Social, held at the Sagebrush Cantina in Calabasas. There was record attendance with more than 165 guests and 19 rep, distributor and manufacturer sponsors. Shortly after the Summer Social, the chapter held its third annual Charity Golf Tournament to benefit U.S. service men and women via Operation Homefront. The attendance totaled 140.

Starting this fall, the chapter's table top shows are returning. The next shows are in Goleta/Santa Barbara on Oct. 28, in Camarillo on Oct. 29, in South Bay on Jan. 27 and at Panasonic Avionics in Orange County on Feb. 24. Additional dates in 2016 will be announced in December. Southern Cal began hosting its table top events in the 1960s, so they are now 50+ years old.

SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS

The Spirit of St. Louis chapter has scheduled a golf tournament at Old Hickory Golf Course in St. Peters, Missouri, on Oct. 2. A happy hour event was also held in mid-June at the Trainwreck Saloon in Westport. About 20 attendees turned out to honor retiree John Murphy of Siemens Manufacturing.

Chapter leaders: It's not too early ...

... to begin pulling together your entries to submit for 2015 Chapter of the Year honors. The online entry form will be released in January, and all chapter programs, activities and projects conducted during this year will be eligible for award consideration.

All Chapter of the Year award recipients in each of four categories — Education, Membership/Member Services, Marketing Services and Special Projects — receive a full-tuition scholarship for a volunteer leader to attend the Chapter Officers Leadership Training (COLT) program in 2016. Questions about the Chapter of the Year program and/or COLT can be directed to Tess Hill at thill@era.org.

ERA chapters enjoyed a summer loaded with fun!

(Right) At the Indiana-Kentucky ERA annual golf outing in August, (l. to r.) Gary Bridwell of Arrow Electronics, Donna Infanger of Electro Reps, Chuck Ridgeway of Horner Electric and Mike Knieser of Rheem "tried doing the YMCA thing," quipped Infanger, a chapter board member who helped planned the event.



(Left) The fourth annual Chicagoland-Wisconsin ERA Baseball Outing brought out 110 reps, distributors, manufacturers and customers to a rooftop at Chicago's Wrigley Field to socialize, network and watch a Cubs-Brewers game.



(Right) Among the reps, engineers and buyers attending the Southern California ERA annual Summer Social were: (l. to r.) Jenny Forneer of Aerovironment, Harvey Magidow of HM Technical Sales, Brandon Quintana of Aerovironment, Sepi Karandish of HM Technical Sales, Andrew Jamora of Aerovironment, Maggie Valdivia of Crane and Raquel Asperas of Flextronics.



(Left) At the third annual Southern California ERA Charity Golf Tournament to benefit Operation Homefront California, (l. to r.) George and Sandy Gibbons of O'Donnell Associates South, Dan Walker, the head golf pro at the Aliso Viejo Country Club, and Bryan Shirley, the event master of ceremonies, gathered for the opening ceremonies.

COMPONENTS

Chuck Tanzola, CPMR

Fusion Sourcing Group
Ithaca, N.Y.
ERA Senior VP/Industry

Deja vu all over again?

The Components Group represents the single largest constituent group within the Electronics Representatives Association, with greater than 80 percent of our member firms participating within this category. Yet due to circumstances, we find ourselves without a chair of this important marketing group (more about this later), so recent issues of *The Representor* have largely been without a report on this industry segment. With encouragement from members of our dedicated ERA National staff, let me try to remedy that for this issue.

In preparation for this endeavor, I took a look back at some Marketing Group Digest reports from past issues of *The Representor* for inspiration. One set, from the fall of 2012, caught my particular interest. (I found them on the ERA website – era.org – and I urge you check them out.)

In that issue, then Components Group Chairman (and current ERA Senior VP/Fiscal and Legal) Dave Norris reported about the “softening” of the components business in Q3 of 2012; and the uncertainty of the coming fourth quarter and following year. It seems very familiar. From all reports, 2015 continues to be a “soft” year in the components industry, and future predictions do nothing to suggest any significant changes coming.

In the same issue, Gary Ponto (chair of the Electronic Systems Integration Group) commented on the concern about the increasing proliferation of reporting requests from manufacturers. I know this is a different industry segment, but this too, seems very familiar. I wonder if there are any reps out there who have seen a reduced number of report requests. Gary went on to express the collective concern of reps that the reporting, while understood, generally was not helping close rates on opportunities and not helping productivity nor forecast accuracy.

Finally, in one more déjà vu moment, Troy Gunnin, chair of the Materials, Assembly, Production & Supply Group, noted in his report, written just before the 2012 election, that “... the political rhetoric is rampant. If these guys could produce all they promise, wouldn’t life be beautiful?” Familiar? I suspect it is. (By the way, this one is easy to predict. The rhetoric will increase over the next 15 months, and the political production will remain flat!)

So, ultimately what’s the take-a-way of this look back? The more things change, the more they stay the same? Perhaps.

We’ve been this way before, so if we don’t have permanent solutions for soft markets, increasing demands and unfulfilled promises, at least reps know how to persevere through them. For sure.

We could use a chairman of the Components Group with original thoughts to share. If that’s of interest to you, I encourage you to make that interest known to us. I welcome any thoughts or comments. Please contact me at ctanzola@fusionsourcing.com.

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

Gary Ponto, CPMR

GP Marketing
Kirkland, Wash.

Reporting on training is becoming commonplace

The cover story in the Summer 2015 issue of *The Representor* focused on training as a challenge for manufacturers and rep firms in 2015 and beyond. Product training has always been a challenge, and it is key to sales with new technologies in the crowded markets of today.

The burden of training has largely been placed on the reps by the manufacturers who recognize this need. Reps are being asked to staff for trainings as well as meeting sales expectations as part of their territory responsibilities but with no further compensation. Many times, support of new technology is not being provided at the factory level in adequate measures and is left to the field salespeople.

Reporting back to the factories on training activities is becoming commonplace. Territory account information that just a few years ago was protected by reps at all costs and was rarely given up is now required in reporting our training and sales activity. What is interesting is that training time seems to often be equated to mind share for a product line when it used to be sales.

Relationship seems to have left the conversation in many cases, but that is what it really boils down to. Your relationship with customers and factories is more important than ever before. You need to think about what “relationship” means to your firm and customers. Pricing, delivery and product have always been parts of the equation, but the “value add” part is most often the closer. And most of the time, that comes from local independent representation.

This article deals with level sensing for the process industry, as this is one of the leading areas that is growing in the sensor and automation market. The drivers for the increased interest in level measurement are three-fold: 1) demands of sophisticated automated processing systems; 2) the need for ever-tighter process control for high quality process accuracy; and 3) the variety of accurate and state of the art sensing technologies.

Improved level measurement accuracy makes it possible to reduce chemical-process variability which results in higher product quality, reduced material and production costs and less waste of materials. Regulations, especially those governing electronic records, have set stringent requirements for accuracy, reliability and electronic reporting. The newer level measurement technologies help meet these requirements.

Refined digital electronics make level sensors and other measurement devices more user-friendly, more reliable and less expensive. Improved communication interfaces can feed level measurement data into an existing control and/or process information system.

Today's level sensors incorporate a variety of materials and alloys to combat harsh environments such as oils, acids and extreme temperatures and pressures. New construction materials, such as PTFE-jacketed material and electro-polished 316 stainless steel, allow sensors to be used in harsh process and food/beverage environments.

The trend today is to replace mechanical and pressure-based measurement tools with systems that measure the distance to the fluid surface by a timing measurement.

Ultrasonic, guided-wave radar and laser transmitters are among the most versatile technologies available. Such systems use the sharp change of a physical parameter (density, dielectric constant and sonic or light reflection) at the process-fluid surface to identify the level. These emerging technologies make use of the latest electronic techniques and incorporate embedded microprocessors for control, analysis and communication functions.

When more complex physical principles are involved, emerging technologies often use computers to perform the calculations. This requires sending data in a machine-readable format from the sensor to the control or monitoring system.

Useful transducer output signal formats for computer automation are current loops, analog voltages and digital signals. Analog voltages are simple to set up and deal with, but may have serious noise and interference issues. To overcome the interference and voltage drop issues, 4-20 mA current output, where the loop current varies with the level measurement, is a more common output technique. Digital signals coded in a number of protocols (Fieldbus, Hart, Profibus, and RS-232) are the most robust, but the older technologies, such as RS-232 and RS-485, can handle only limited distances. This makes them useful only in legacy systems. New wireless capabilities can be found in the latest transmitters' signals which allow the output signal to be sent over tremendous distances.

If you have any questions, please contact me at tom@agtechnologiesllc.com.

(continued on next page)

INSTRUMENTATION, AUTOMATION & CONTROLS

Tom Diercksmeier, CPMR

AG Technologies, LLC

Scottsdale, Ariz.

Level sensing for process industry is growth market



UNIVERSITY



This convenient, low-cost educational service offers **ALL** ERA member company personnel (and your families) **HUNDREDS of ONLINE COURSES** to boost your knowledge, skills and professionalism. **ERA UNIVERSITY**, in partnership with ed2go, an affiliation of 1,500 educational institutions, delivers:

- **Instructor-facilitated classes** with live interaction to connect with both faculty and fellow students.
 - Access to lessons **when** you choose, **where** you choose, any time, **24-7**.
- A vast array of courses, covering **sales and marketing, business skills, software training and technology, personal development** and much, much more.
- Easy **on-line registration** ... with NO textbooks required ... and NO minimum or maximum class.

Most classes run for **six weeks** and include 12 two-hour lessons for just **\$79** per course.

To view the entire catalog, read all the details about each class and then register, go to **ed2go.com/era**.

MATERIALS, ASSEMBLY, PRODUCTION & SUPPLY

Troy Gunnin

Sun Rep, Inc.
Tampa, Fla.

Auto plant expansions and exports are good news for electronics industry

It's hard to believe that Labor Day is already past. Where has the year gone? The stock market has been on a roller coaster. Depending on whom you talk with, things may be looking up or poised for some trouble. We see a lot of positives, but we also hear from several manufacturers that business is "soft." The major players seem to be "accentuating the positive" and moving ahead. This seems certainly to be true in the automotive industry.

To reinforce that point, General Motors is set to invest more than \$5 billion in its U.S. assembly plants over the next three years. The beneficiaries are Kansas City, Kan., and three cities in Michigan — Lansing, Pontiac and Warren. GM may also spend some big bucks on plants in Arlington, Tex., and Ft. Wayne, Ind.

In other automotive expansion news, Volvo unveiled plans for a \$500 million assembly plant near Charleston, S.C. The company plans to build cars for sale in the U.S. and for export. The first vehicles are expected to roll off the assembly line in 2018.

Along the same train of thought, I found some other interesting facts. We look around us at all the "import" vehicles. Well, did you know that the U.S. exported a record high 2.1 million vehicles in 2014? Also, in the past few months, Chinese, French, German and Japanese automotive suppliers have announced plans to build U.S. assembly plants. Collectively, these four facilities will represent an investment of about \$200 million and potentially provide 1,000 jobs. Perhaps they are "foreign" brands, but they'll be made in the USA.

Speaking of made in the USA, more than 60,000 manufacturing jobs were brought to the U.S. by reshoring and foreign direct investment in 2014, according to the Reshoring Initiative. That's a 400 percent increase since 2003. Perhaps the bleeding has stopped. We have gone from losing about 140,000 manufacturing jobs per year to gaining 10,000 plus per year.

There's a lot of talk here about the automotive industry, but this industry represents a very large electronic component market and is a major contributor to our industry. So the health of this industry contributes strongly to our industry growth as well.

RF / MICROWAVE & WIRELESS

Mike Harris

E. G. Holmes & Associates, Inc.
Apex, N.C.

New capabilities are bringing many improvements

With more advanced R/F and microwave devices, we continue to see more activity in the development of test equipment having PXI computer controls (PXI = PCI eXtensions for Instrumentation). These extended test capabilities are required to validate many new products. PXI-based systems that meet each new requirement can be customized with modules to meet newer tests along with offering the promise of simple upgrades as may be required. LabVIEW software (National Instruments) is most often used to integrate these "component-based" test sets.

Traditional military new design business has been off for some time as many systems seem to have been designed for the long haul. We still see an occasional requirement for upgrades within platforms as old as the B-52 and on many long-deployed naval vessels. Newer designs more often involve remote control and remote sensing platforms. These systems would include remotely-controlled combat vehicles as well. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) seem to be where most of the new design is, and it will be for a while.

In new business developments, Cree (in North Carolina) has spun out a new subsidiary. Cree's business has mostly centered around the use of silicon carbide in production of LEDs used in lighting systems. Cree also owns a viable gallium-nitride-on-silicon-carbide-substrate business producing very high power and broadband RF products. The new company is named Wolfspeed, and it will concentrate on doing things at "higher voltages, higher temperatures and higher frequencies." One of its first projects will be to develop electronic systems as replacements for hydraulic controls within high performance aircraft.

Also on the horizon is extended use of 3D printing in the fabrication of very dense semiconductors. Coventor, Inc., (also in North Carolina) now offers a fifth-generation software package designed to better understand the effects of multiple variables within a semiconductor before it goes to process. In addition, the use of improved test equipment (as above) will help to assure validation of these products' performance as they are produced.

The automotive industry is becoming a large microwave product potential as many new systems required by various government agencies will use devices that range in frequencies at ultra-sound ranges up through 81 GHz and on into infrared and visible light. Look for adaptive cruise controls on newer automobiles and light duty trucks in the very near future.

With the above new capabilities in application, power, testing and performance, we look forward to many improvements in circuit board design and connection technologies.

*Electronics Representatives
Association*



ERA Officers

Chairman of the Board:

Paul Nielsen, CPMR
paul@bnmsales.com

President:

Dan Parks, CPMR
dan@westelec.com

Senior Vice President/Fiscal & Legal:

David Norris
dnorris@norrisrep.com

Senior Vice President/Education:

Kathie Cahill, CPMR
kcahill@netsalesrep.com

Senior Vice President/Membership:

John O'Brien, CPMR
jobrien@cbane.com

Senior Vice President/Industry:

Chuck Tanzola, CPMR
ctanzola@fusionsourcing.com

Chief Executive Officer &

Executive Vice President (Ex-Officio):

Walter E. Tobin
wtobin@era.org

ERA Staff

Chief Executive Officer

& Executive Vice President:

Walter E. Tobin
wtobin@era.org

Executive Assistant:

Karin Derkacz
kderkacz@era.org

Communications, Conferences and

Chapter Services 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

Finance Director:

William R. Warfield
bwarfield@era.org

ERA Office:

309 W. Washington St., Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Phone: 312-419-1432 • Fax: 312-419-1660

Email: info@era.org • URL: era.org

LEGALLY SPEAKING: Succession planning

(continued from page 17)

transfer of ownership could trigger a termination by principals. All principals must be contacted and made comfortable with the succession so they perceive the transition as a seamless and positive transfer of ownership.

Determining the value or purchase price of the agency has numerous ramifications. There are many methods and formulas for determining the value of a rep agency, but ultimately a rep agency is worth the price at which a buyer is willing to pay and the owner is willing to sell. A rule of thumb often used as a starting point is one year's gross commission income, but that number often gives way to using an average or weighted average and multiplying the result by an agreed factor between 75 and 125 percent. In unusual cases, rep agencies sell using a factor as high as 150 percent. Although not common, some rep owners engage an independent business appraiser to determine the value of the rep agency, which often leads to a fixed purchase price and fixed monthly payments. However, the bottom line is, if the buyer cannot pay the fixed monthly payments, then the seller simply will not get paid unless protected by very strong security, such as a mortgage on the buyer's home, other business or like collateral.

In practice, a variable purchase price for the agency often is the preferred option. From a practical standpoint, the buyer and seller are always at risk if the agency does not continue to do well. If the purchase price is too high, the buyer will not be able to pay. Lawsuits to collect are expensive and, if the non-payment results from a lack of funds, generally not worthwhile. A variable purchase price often solves those types of problems.

An agreed percentage of gross commissions paid monthly for a given number of months will often work best for both parties. One proven formula enables the buyer to pay the seller 15 percent of the gross commissions (paid monthly) for a period of seven years. That totals 105 percent of gross commissions of the rep agency (15 percent x 7 = 105 percent). If the commission income increases, the seller benefits because 15 percent of a greater number yields more dollars to the seller. The buyer also benefits because, if the buyer is paying 15 percent of gross commission income to the seller, then there is 85 percent left over for the buyer. If the business is on the downtrend, loses an important principal, loses customers or a valuable employee, the buyer will not be able to pay the seller anyway, resulting in a lower sales price. When appropriate, the buyer can be protected with an agreed cap on the upside, and the seller can be protected with a floor on the downside.

The transaction must be structured so that it is most efficient for both parties from a tax and business standpoint. The transaction will typically be a sale of the company's assets or the owner's stock. The attorneys and accountants must look at the tax considerations and perhaps use consulting agreements to shift the tax benefits or burdens from one party to the other in order to make the transaction fair.

If the seller is a C corporation and sells assets, there is taxable gain and a double layer of tax, namely tax at the corporate level and tax at the shareholder level, which results in an inefficient transaction. Therefore, if the seller is a C corporation, it is best for the corporation to sell stock, provided the purchaser can be convinced to accept the liabilities that go along with such a stock transaction. This can often be accomplished with proper indemnifications, hold harmless agreements and, most importantly, extensive due diligence by the buyer.

If an S Corporation sells assets, there is no tax at the corporate level, but all taxes flow through to the shareholders. This single tax makes an S corp sale of assets more efficient for the seller.

In an asset transaction, the parties must allocate the purchase price among the various classes of assets. The buyer will get a stepped-up basis in each asset class and greater depreciation of the purchase price for each class of assets.

The basic legal documents for a typical succession plan include:

1. A Letter of Intent or Term Sheet which spells out the deal terms and serves as an outline for the transaction.
2. The Purchase and Sale Documents, such as an Asset Purchase Agreement or Stock Purchase Agreement.
3. A Promissory Note (if there is a fixed purchase price).
4. Security documents to secure the payment, such as a lien on the commission income stream or a personal guaranty.

Succession planning must start early in order to be successful. The services of a competent accountant, attorney and perhaps a financial advisor are not unusual. The final result of a successful succession plan will be peace and harmony within the business and the agency, cooperation and contentment from principals and customers, substantial financial rewards for the owner, significant opportunities for the buyer, and a cohesiveness among both key and non-key employees of the agency. ■

Develop a Sharper Sales Team. Simply.



- 10-minute lessons for sales managers, reps, and sales engineers that can last a career.
- Keep your sales team focused, motivated, inspired, and skilled.
- Specifically for highly technical, complex sales.
- Add millions to the bottom line.

saleswise 



Nicki Weiss

The SalesWise Academy delivers the tools and support you and your team need.
Visit www.saleswiseacademy.com or contact us at (416) 778-4145 or e-mail nicki@saleswise.ca

MEMBER SERVICES

EMPOWERING SYSTEMS offers ERA members discounts on its CRM tools for both reps and manufacturers. Online demos are available for both the Account Manager and Account Reporter programs. For information, visit empoweringsystems.com.

UPS is now ERA's member service provider for shipping of all kinds. For discounts of up to 34 percent, call 800-MEMBERS (636-2377).

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 salesreplayawyers.com. Or call Gerry Newman or Adam Glazer at 312-648-2300.

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, including descriptions of each program, and to download files, go to era.org.

PERFECTION DATA has partnered with manufacturers since 1988 to provide POS reporting and data management with a package tailored to meet monthly and other informational needs. Reporting and data management services are now also available to rep firms. To learn more, visit perfectiondata.com.

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. Carla is also one of ERA's Expert Access resources, so members can call her for a free telephone consultation at 402-721-6590.

ERA UNIVERSITY provides member firm employees and their families with hundreds of online college, business, technology and special interest courses through a network of 1,500 educational institutions. The instructor-led classes offer live interaction and access to lessons on a 24-7 basis. Classes run six weeks and include 12 two-hour lessons for just \$79. For details and to view the catalog, go to ed2go.com/era.

BUDDE MARKETING SYSTEMS is the industry's leading provider of point-of-sale (POS) reporting. With 15+ years of experience, BMS

provides solutions to drive business growth, improve efficiency and maximize profitability. BMS offers a vast selection of standard reports or can customize reports to achieve your business goals. For details, call 708-301-2111, or email sales@buddemarketing.com.

JLH CONSULTING advises domestic and foreign manufacturers who want to establish the best sales and distribution networks in North and Latin America. The firm can also provide extensive background checks on potential new hires. These can be conducted on candidates identified either through JLH's executive search service or through a client's own resources. For a free telephone consultation, contact Jim Hartranft at jlhconsultinginc@earthlink.net; or visit jlhconsult.com.

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. Bring your sales agency together with a single, shared solution to increase productivity and reduce costs. For a demonstration, visit MRSware.com, or call 866-795-8386.

REPCARE is the employee benefits resource for reps. It provides information and advice about benefits and to help rep firms obtain the insurance coverage they need. RepCare offers group life, long-term disability, voluntary life and accident insurance. For details contact John Doyle or Lisa Gido at RepCare@adcbenefits.com or call 888-243-0174.

RPMS offers sales analysis, commission reconciliation and sales force data exchange software exclusively for reps. For more information about its programs, go to rpms.com.

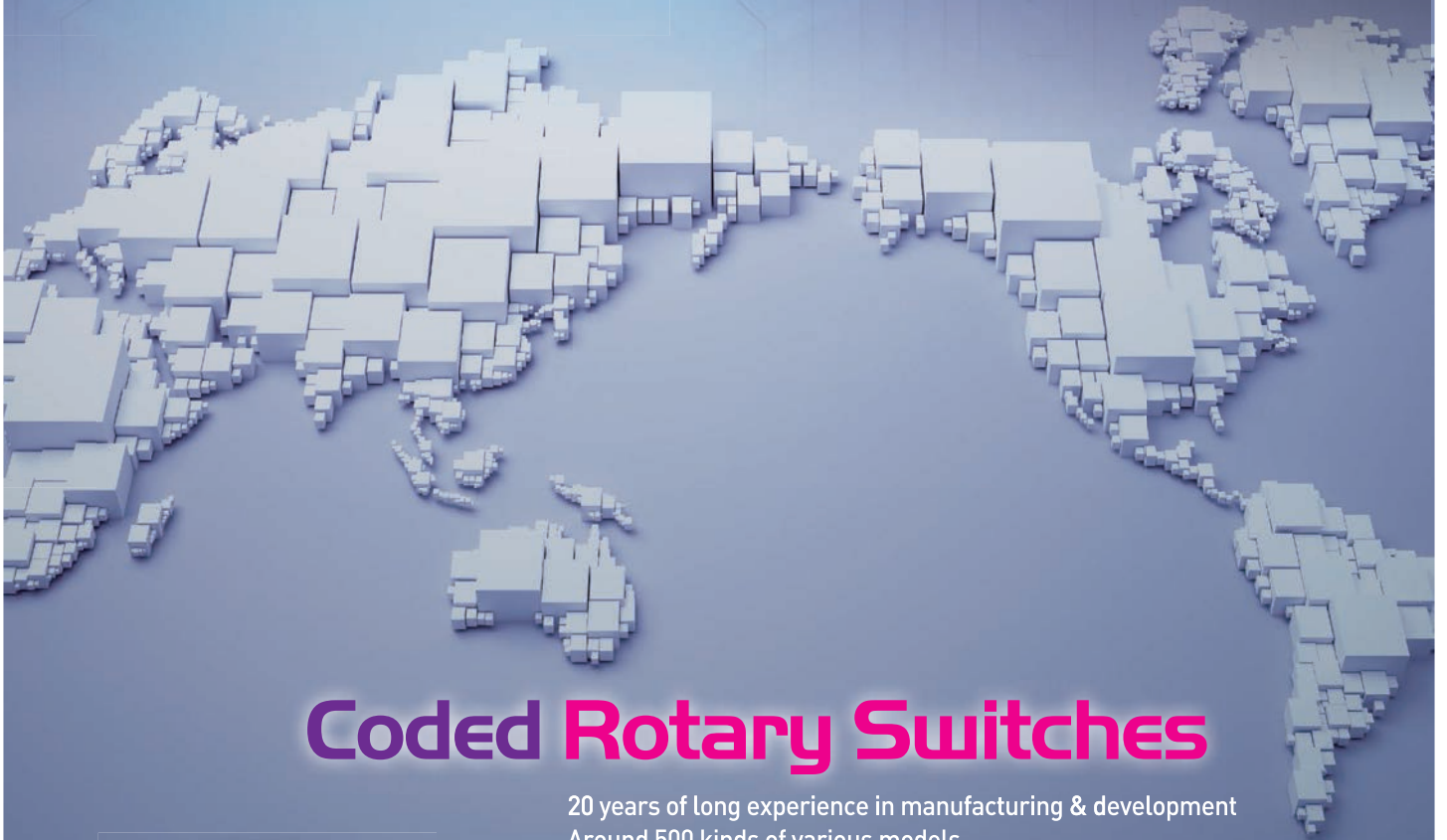
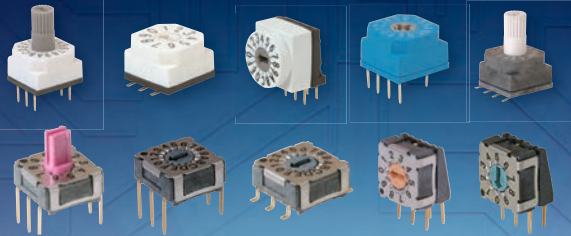
The SALESWISE ACADEMY is specifically designed for engineers and other technical salespeople. Nicki Weiss offers bi-weekly, 10-minute audio lessons with follow-up calls to help participants feel more confident in working with customers. For a free trial, go to saleswiseacademy.com/era.

REMBRANDT ADVANTAGE is ERA's newest member service provider, offering tools for employee selection, development and evaluation. ERA members say they can't do without this company when bringing new people on board. For details and to access a member discount, visit rembrandtadvantage.com.

*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 **Amazon.com**,
Office Depot, **Penny Wise**
Office Products, **Avis** and
Hertz Car Rentals (which are
accessible **ONLY** via the
ERA website).*

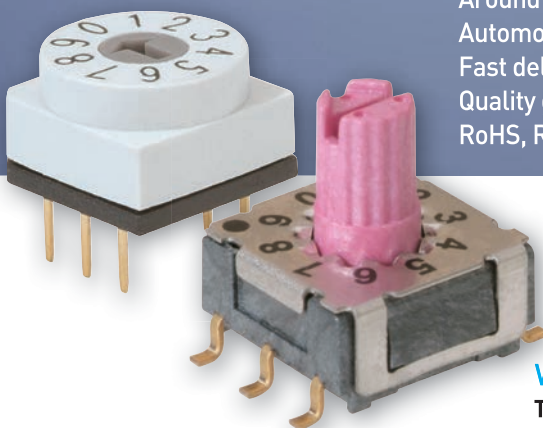


SUNGmun ELECTRONICS
www.sungmun.co.kr



Coded Rotary Switches

20 years of long experience in manufacturing & development
Around 500 kinds of various models
Automotive production
Fast delivery
Quality guarantee
RoHS, REACH compliant



Rep. Wanted

We are new in USA but famous in Europe & Asia
TEL. +82-32-328-1941 E-mail. sungmun@sungmun.co.kr



REPS WANTED



4630 North Avenue ■ Oceanside CA 92056 ■ 760.945.0230 ■ www.interfacedisplays.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVES WANTED

for
military and commercial avionic
annunciators, AMLCD displays, data entry/
recording/transfer devices, keyboards/
keypads, and external LED lighting
in
New England, Pacific Northwest,
Arizona, and New York

Contact: Bill Lang
blang@interfacedisplays.com



PCB

PROTOTYPES
PRODUCTION

Proven
PCB Source
Since 2003

Super
PCB

www.superpcb.com

High Quality PCB Supplier seeks sales representation.

PCBs up to 30 layers.
Fast turn prototypes and high volume productions.
Quality certifications
(ISO9001, UL and TS16949).
High quality + low cost = great earning potential!
Contact us today!

Jeff James
E-mail: jeff.j@superpcb.com
Phone: 214-550-9837, Ext. 710

Zeus Battery Products

POWER YOUR WORLD

Seeking Manufacturing Rep

Selling portable powered devices? Do they need longer battery life? Partner with our design team to provide profitable custom battery pack solutions. Call or email today: **877.469.4255**, mfrrep@zeusbatteryproducts.com



338 Wurlitzer
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 748-4875
FAX (815) 748-4336

Unified Wire and Cable, Inc.

Established manufacturer of electrical lead wire / hook-up wire is in search of experienced manufacturer's representatives for various available territories in North America to meet our expansion goals.

Interested parties should contact:

Tim Foley (VP of Sales)
tim.foley@unifiedwire.com
847-381-8186
www.unifiedwire.com



HEATRON LED INTEGRATION

Sales Reps wanted in the West, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic states to represent industry leading provider of LED Lighting Integration with emphasis on LED modules and SMT manufacturing. Heatron (WWW.HEATRON.COM) designs and manufactures custom-engineered LED lighting components for OEMs.

Target Markets: Original Equipment Manufacturers of lighting fixtures, specialized lighting devices, and lighting related componentry.

Positioned to take advantage of the tremendous growth in the LED lighting market, Heatron LED helps luminaire manufacturers reduce cost and speed time-to-market while ensuring superior quality and performance. Heatron provides its sales partners with professional, comprehensive support to assist with the cultivation of sales efforts.

Contact rickk@heatron.com

DON'T MISS IT!

ERA's 47th Management and Marketing Conference

Feb. 28 - March 1, 2016
Austin, Texas

For sponsorship and program details, visit era.org.

See the REPS AVAILABLE ads on page 34.

REPS AVAILABLE



CC ELECTRO
Manufacturers'
Representative

"THE RESPONSIVE COMPANY"

Responsive to Customers,
Distributors and Principals

IN/KY/OH/MI

715 N. Senate Ave.,
Indianapolis, IN 46202

317-612-5000 FAX 317-612-5005
carol_cohen@ccrep.com
www.ccrep.com



ASSOCIATES

**Our most important assets are
customers and principals.**

For experienced, professional representation in
Chicagoland, Wisconsin and NW Indiana, contact

Rich Hobby, CPMR

219-226-0539

richh@rahassoc.com



19 Years Serving the SW
PCB Design, Fabrication & Assembly,
Flex Circuits, Metal Fabrication, Wire &
Cable Assembly, Precision Machining

BILL MILLER • bill@bmatech.com
Call 972-740-0993
Visit www.bmatech.com

Electronic Mfg Representative



**Manufacturers' Representatives
Engineering & Scientific Sales**

Northern California ■ Silicon Valley

**Sensor / Heater Technology Market-Space
Research & Development - OEM Platform Sales**

- Industrial sensors - pressure/temperature/RH/light
- Consumer sensors/LEDs - pressure/temperature/RH
- Semiconductor tools - heaters/level/gap sensors
- Scientific apparatus - pressure/force/temperature
- Physical metrology - temperature/pressure/force/gap
- Aerospace - pressure/temperature/gap

Our Team

Dan Codella, CMG Premier
Cy Hill, Interconnect Sales

Contact

David Colquhoun, Ph.D.
Sales Scientist, Managing Partner
Analogogs@comcast.net • 415.279.2261

Analog Associates, LLC
875A Island Drive PMB 315
Alameda, CA 94502

Linked-in Profile/Principles:
linkedin.com/pub/david-colquhoun-ph-d/6/20/2b0/

DORAN ASSOCIATES
Serving the Pacific Northwest since 1968

OREGON
1500 NW Bethany Blvd. Suite 200
Beaverton, OR 97006
503.640.4500

WASHINGTON
19125 NORTHCREEK PKWY. SUITE 120
BOTHELL, WA 98011
425.488.1200

ENGINEERED COMPONENT SALES
SERVING OEMS & DISTRIBUTORS

DORANSALES.COM

**Ads are due DEC. 4
for the Winter 2016
issue of
*The Representer.***

**Questions?
Email stierney@era.org.**

REPS and MANUFACTURERS:

Access to ERA education
programs has **NEVER** been
easier or cost less!

All **ERA WEBINAR** files are
available for just \$20 per
program for members (\$30 for
non-members). Listen and learn

**WHENEVER and
WHEREVER** you choose.



TITLES AVAILABLE:

- Becoming Your Reps' Emotional Favorite • Boosting Your Time Management Skills
- Closing for Commitment Starts in the First 10 Seconds
- Consultative Selling Skills for Reps
- The Five Worst Mistakes Reps Make and How to Fix Them
- Goal Setting: If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Probably End Up Somewhere Else!
- I Hate Cold Calling: Alternatives for High Impact Prospecting
- Managing Your Line Portfolio
- Negotiating with Both Customers and Principals
- Redesigning the Rep-Principal Relationship • Strategic Planning for Any Size Rep Firm
- Time and Territory Management: Parts I and II • Turning Objections into Sales
- Valuing, Buying, Selling or Merging a Rep Firm

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

MANUFACTURERS WANTED



**Quality Plastic Injection
Molder Wanted**

Medical & Industrial Markets
ISO 9001 & 13485 Certified
California, Oregon and Washington

Contact Dave Gastel at
Dgastel@degcomp.com
or call 408 718 5233.



CERTIFIED SALES PROFESSIONAL

**ENERGIZE YOUR SALES CAREER BY BECOMING
A CERTIFIED SALES PROFESSIONAL**

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - MARCH 17-20, 2016

(Arrive March 16)

DALLAS, TX - APRIL 14-17, 2016

(Arrive April 13)

*"I'm a huge fan of your programs – They've helped shape
the business person I am today."*

Colin Fein, CPMR, CSP - Associated Marketing, Inc.



CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MANUFACTURERS REPRESENTATIVE

CONFIRM YOUR PLACE AS AN INDUSTRY LEADER

AUSTIN, TX - JANUARY 11-15, 2016

(Arrive January 10)

AT&T Conference Center
University of Texas at Austin

*"I attended the CPMR training and it was one of the best
experiences of my life."*

Brandon Smith, CPMR Candidate - G.L. Smith Associates

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE ON PROGRAMS THAT IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY & PROFITABILITY



MANUFACTURER'S BEST PRACTICES WORKING WITH REPS

AUSTIN, TX - JANUARY 12-13, 2016

*Two days. Dozens of ideas to
strengthen your rep network.*



Comments about MBP:

"Very applicable and high value."

"The info picked up here will help us take the relationship to the next level."

"Immediately useful."



FOR PROGRAM DATES, LOCATIONS AND DETAILS, VISIT WWW.MRERF.ORG

MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

P 303 463 1801 ■ Certify@MRERF.org ■ www.MRERF.org

Building Sales Professionalism Through Certification



LEARN MORE
BY SCANNING
THIS QR
CODE



Electronics Representatives Association
309 West Washington Street, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60606

Road Warriors Welcome

Let Allied's 43 Sales Offices throughout North America be your home base for:

- Local training
- Joint sales calls
- Joint customer fairs
- Local account and territory planning



Call **1.800.433.5700** to schedule your next visit to your **local Allied sales office.**

thinkallied.com



1.800.433.5700



©Allied Electronics, Inc. 2015. 'Allied Electronics' and the Allied Electronics logo are trademarks of Allied Electronics, Inc. An Electrocomponents Company.

