

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.