



**Mark Peterson, CPMR**  
President  
Johnson Company

*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 Mark Peterson, CPMR, president of the Johnson Company, headquartered in New Brighton, Minn. Mark has been involved in both the rep business and ERA for 15 years.*

*The Representor asked Mark 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.**

My wife and I have been married for 13 years, and we have three children. Our oldest is a nine-year old son, and we have two daughters who are ages six and four. Someone should have told us that zone defense was more challenging than one-on-one, as our kids keep us plenty busy with soccer, swimming, golf, dance lessons and more. We thoroughly enjoy Minnesota and all our seasons and the fun it brings from boating in the summer to ice skating in the winter.

### **What are some things you enjoy outside of the workplace?**

Simply playing with the kids and hanging out as a family. It does not matter if it's catching sunfish so fast that you cannot bait the hooks quickly enough, or digging a snow fort that the entire family can fit into, or taking the next family vacation to some crazy new location. It's just fun to be together.

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

Our rep firm has been an ERA member for 32 years, and I have been a member for more than 15 years, since I joined Johnson Company in 2000.

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

I was the VP of sales and engineering for an injection molding company, and we were using reps to grow our business. I was thinking about starting my own rep firm when I met Mark Johnson (founder of Johnson Company). He was looking for an exit strategy from the business, and it seemed like a natural fit, so I jumped in with both feet. We developed a succession plan, and the rest is history. Mark has been fully retired now for a decade, but it's always great when he stops by for a cup of coffee.

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

I could easily talk about various trips around the world and all the great people I have met, and it's true that these are rewarding parts of the job. However, nothing compares to understanding a customer's issue, reaching through the layers of our various principals, bringing the right team together, and solving the problem. Regardless of the opportunity size, responding to a customer's problem with a good solution is like hitting a home run.

### **Briefly describe your rep firm.**

Johnson Company is focused on sensors, interconnects and electronic solutions. We have structured a line card that is very strong for

OEM sensing solutions, flexible for custom interconnect and cable requirements, distribution savvy for logistics and component sales, and now we are paving the way toward providing new IoT and M2M marketplace solutions for our customer base. We can help on a standard part, engineer custom components, or we can help develop a complete wireless/cellular IoT solution that can enable our customers to enter new markets and generate new revenue streams.

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

Recently we have expanded our outreach to the smaller, rest of the world (ROW) type accounts. We have brought on new resources to invest in smaller customers, allowing our experienced staff to dive deeper into our large OEM customer base. We believe this will expand our sales faster and be more effective for the principals we represent.

### **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?**

Being an active ERA member and participating in the various networking events and conferences has been invaluable in helping me grow our business. Where else can you find people involved in our exact business who truly want the business model to succeed and prosper? Where else can you meet people for the first time, basically as strangers, and they are willing to share and help, and then the next thing you know, they are your decade-long friends? Our firm simply would not be as successful without the connections and education that ERA has provided throughout the years.

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

Yes, yes, and yes! Social media certainly are adding new twists to our traditional sales role. I will admit that this is all a learning process — how to best utilize these new tools, which tools to focus on and how to expand our marketing and sales reach to help educate our customer base on new products and technologies. It's also enabled us to more quickly receive the latest information on markets, products, customers and competitors. It's a fun and new challenge that is simply becoming part of our daily world.

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

My wife and I are both only children, and with three children of our own now, sibling rivalry is certainly a new frontier for us!