



David Berryman
President
Signal Enterprises, Inc.

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 David Berryman, president of Signal Enterprises, Inc., of Fullerton, Cal. David has been involved in the industry for more than 30 years and has been a member of ERA for 19 years.

The Representor asked David 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've been married to an incredible woman, Beverly, for almost 31 years. She is very active in our Fullerton community, and I consider her queen of all local volunteers. She is also enjoying her third term as a Fullerton Elementary School District Trustee. I have two children, Corbyn age 26, who teaches in Arizona at the Great Hearts Academy, and Andrea, age 24, who works at the Honda Center as a premium sales coordinator.

What are some things you enjoy outside of the workplace?

Golf, when I can, yard work every weekend and any time spent with my family and friends. I usually sneak in a water skiing/camping trip every year.

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

I was originally hired as a direct salesperson for Carlingswitch, now Carling Technologies, in 1982. I started my rep firm, Current Controls, in 1996 and merged with our existing firm, Signal Enterprises, in 1999. I joined ERA in 1996 and am the current board president of the Southern California Chapter.

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

My original interest was needing a job and access to a free business car in 1982 — seriously. Becoming a manufacturers' rep was due to a desire to come back to the west coast after six years in Connecticut with Carlingswitch. I had reservations about becoming a rep due to having to be "the guy." And through my experience as a regional manager, I understood that good reps work their tails off. In hindsight, I am very glad that I made the move.

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

People — working with great people at Signal, our principals, customers and distributors. My first regional manager made a comment that I would enjoy this business, not because of the money (certainly accurate there!), but because of the friendships that would be formed. He was right. I long ago came to the conclusion that all people in this industry, while they may have bigger titles than others, are just people doing their jobs the best they can. It is my priority to enable them to do it better.

Briefly describe your rep firm.

Signal is a five-person firm with four outside salespeople and one inside salesperson. We have some part-time employees as well to help with clerical and financial activities. We all work out of our homes since finding a central office location in southern California that is convenient for all would be impossible. We want salespeople on the road selling, not commuting several hours a

day to and from a main office.

Our size hits a sweet spot for southern California, offering our principals, OEMs and distributors access to a very focused group of salespeople. We have the feet on the street that can cover our geography and a line card that can be represented appropriately.

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

We created a sample box that has become an unbelievable tool we use during sales calls. It allows us to review all lines with customers EVERY TIME we make a sales call. In addition to offering the Signal line card, we set our kit down on the table before the meeting starts, and invariably we get to talk about a product that we normally would not have, or we get to meet with someone (usually a first-time introduction) whom we would not normally have met. It's an incredible tool. (See photo below,)



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?

It's all about networking — creating business relationships as part of a group of companies that have the same "running a rep company" issues as Signal. As reps, we do compete against each other with common product lines, but a relationship can still exist enabling ideas to be shared and common business issues to be discussed and resolved. Every single ERA meeting or event I attend is worthwhile. Something is learned or reinforced every time. Even if the event is not on a preferred focus topic, I still walk away better for the time spent.

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

Our Southern Cal Chapter has a weekly newsletter that is very useful. I use Facebook infrequently and LinkedIn almost never except for reading activity on ERA's LinkedIn Group.

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

One interesting fact is that I am not very interesting at all! My commitment is to not "drop the ball," either in personal or business relationships. If I write it down, it gets done.