

ERA in action: taking a glance back and a peek forward

By now, we have all recovered (hopefully!) from EDS — days that began at 7 a.m. and lasted through dinner ... running from meeting to meeting, up different elevator banks, suite to suite, all while bumping into SO MANY friends whom you see “on the fly” or chat briefly with in a cramped elevator.

Yet, somehow we all kind of love it, don't we? And in many ways, we thrive on it. The activity seems to generate its own energy and electricity. Yet, we need to remember this old adage: “Never confuse activity with accomplishment.”

So, what did YOUR ERA accomplish at EDS? Plenty! Let me list just a few of the activities and accomplishments that YOUR ERA had in Las Vegas.

Appointments: Your CEO had 31 appointments starting at 3 p.m. on Monday and all day long through Thursday. These appointments were with existing and prospective rep and supplier companies. The reception to the “New Era at ERA” was overwhelming and a bit humbling. Everyone was so interested in learning more about ERA and how it can help them navigate these challenging times.

EDS Spark session: Your CEO and John Denslinger, CEO of ECIA co-facilitated a session with young personnel of reps, manufacturers and distributors — the future of our industry — on the past changes of the industry and the challenges that lie ahead. The session was lively with many great questions. It seems as if our industry is in good hands with these future leaders.

ERA/ECIA breakfast session: Don Hnatyshin, senior vice president/chief supply chain and procurement officer of Jabil, presented to almost 500 attendees about the new

digital age of our industry and the mandate to “Lead or Follow: There is no options but to ‘Follow Fast.’” It was an excellent session.

ERA new member lunch: ERA hosted 40 existing and prospective members at a luncheon session. A brief presentation was made on ERA and its strong value proposition to its membership. It was also a lively and enjoyable session with lots of questions and comments.

ERA booth: Your great ERA staff, consisting of Karin Derkacz and Stephanie Tierney, manned the ERA booth from dawn until dusk. They were answering questions, comments and inputs on how to make ERA even better and how to continue to add great value to its membership. Many thanks to Karin and Stephanie for all of their hard work on-site.

But as you know, our work has only just begun. After every meeting, there is a great deal of follow-up that needs to take place so activity can turn into results.

YOUR ERA is now busy with follow-up calls and emails to drive new membership and to craft new programs based on the input received. There is no easy way to get this done — one rep company, manufacturer or distributor at a time.

But enough about the past, let's take a peek forward on plans for the second half of 2016.

New member category — Distribution!

As you may have learned from our new ad on Woodstock Wire (www.woodstock-wire.com), we are working hard to grow our membership among the rep and manufacturer communities. In addition, I am pleased to announce that we will be adding distribution

(continued on page 30)



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EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY: ERA in action

(continued from page 11)

to the membership rolls at both the national and chapter levels during the second half of 2016.

Adding distribution to the membership rolls was a decision that was approved by the ERA Board of Directors a while back but never implemented. We needed time to amend the ERA National bylaws to allow for this change and to give the chapters time to amend their local bylaws to allow for distribution membership at the chapter level. This has now been accomplished at the national level. Many of our chapters have already included distribution into the membership rolls and have made the necessary bylaw changes already. ERA National now will be working with the chapters to assist them as needed in this transitional period. ERA National will also be soliciting the different corporate offices of the distributors to advise them of this change and to welcome them into ERA!

Distribution is the “third leg on the stool.” Now along with manufacturers’ reps and manufacturers, ERA provides a solid and complete value proposition to its membership and to the industry. Stay tuned for more to come on this exciting development.

Electronica 2016

On page 15 in this issue, you will find an article written by John Hutson, CPMR, vice president of The MacInnis Company and president of the New England Chapter, about the upcoming Electronica 2016 and his role in helping to represent both The MacInnis Company and ERA in November in Munich. John is a true professional who will be a great “Face of ERA” at the event.

I will share more about ERA and its plans for Electronica 2016 in our Fall issue.

Chapter activities

As you know, the heart and soul of ERA rests in its chapters. ERA has many great and active chapters that have invited me into their “homes” to attend and speak at their local meetings. In the past few months, I have been honored to attend and speak at the following chapters: Minnesota, Texas, Chicagoland-Wisconsin, Empire State, New England, Spirit of St. Louis, Carolinas and New York.

These chapters are all active while being managed by folks like you: rep presidents/leaders who are trying to balance their time between running their businesses along with managing the ERA chapter. My hat is off to these chapter leaders and all of YOU for the time that you give to ERA. I am ready to come see you as needed to help reinforce your local chapter events.

So a lot has been done, but there’s lots more to do. I’m all ears to hear from you on what you want the ERA staff and me to do to help continue our progress. My phone is always on — 617-901-4088. ■

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