

# *The* **Representor**

THE VOICE OF MULTIPLE-LINE SELLING IN THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY



Electronics Representatives Association

SUMMER 2025

## **FROM THE SUPPLY CHAIN FRONT LINES TO THE CLASSROOM**

Practical and academic insights into global  
supply chain challenges and solutions  
from an executive-turned-professor



### **INSIDE:**

Rising Stars Q&A, **p. 8** • Executive Commentary, **p. 12** • Legally Speaking, **p. 24**



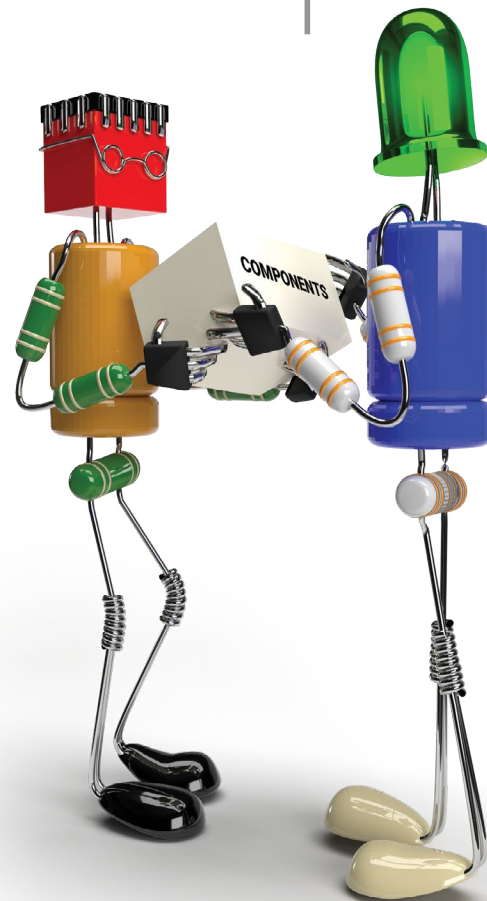


For all your **Interconnect, Passive and Electromechanical** components phone **1.800.CALL.TTI** or visit us online at **tti.com**

TTI also has discretes, sensors, opto, speciality semis, protection components, and more, **in stock and ready to ship.**

# Reppin' the Reps

Need a trusted partner to fulfill those orders you live by? Work with your local **TTI Specialists** and learn why the **Human Component** can be the most important part of your sales call.



## The Representor

ELECTRONICS  
REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION

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



Founded 1935

ERA HEADQUARTERS OFFICE  
T: 312-419-1432  
info@era.org • era.org

Chief Executive Officer:  
**Walter E. Tobin**  
[wtobin@era.org](mailto:wtobin@era.org)

Editor:  
**Clare Kluck**  
[ckluck@era.org](mailto:ckluck@era.org)

Cover:  
**Jeff Weber**  
SW Spark

ERA IS A MEMBER OF THE:  
• Alliance of Manufacturers' Representatives Associations  
• Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Research Foundation

■ THE REPRESENTOR (ISSN 1057-0373) (Vol. 36, Issue 3), is published by Electronics Representatives Association, 1325 S. Arlington Heights Road, Suite 204, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007. Additional ERA member company, manufacturer or distributor member annual subscriptions are \$24.00 each. Non-member annual subscriptions are \$48.00. Foreign annual subscriptions are \$50.00. (All prices quoted are payable in U.S. dollars.) American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Discover charges accepted.

■ Copyright 2025 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 ERA, 1325 S. Arlington Heights Road., Suite 204, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007; info@era.org.

## ERA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2025 - 2027

Chairman of the Board:  
**John O'Brien, CPMR**

President:  
**Tom Griffin, CPMR**

Senior Vice President/Fiscal & Legal:  
**John Hutson, CPMR**

Senior Vice President/Education:  
**Ellen Coan, CPMR**

Senior Vice President/Membership:  
**Lori Bruno, CPMR**

Senior Vice President/Industry:  
**Cameron English, CPMR**

Senior Vice President at Large:  
**Kingsland Coombs, CPMR, CSP**

Senior Vice President/Manufacturers:  
**John Guetens**

Senior Vice President at Large:  
**Ken Bellerio**

Senior Vice President/Distributors:  
**Lou Copley**

Chief Executive Officer  
(Ex-Officio):  
**Walter E. Tobin**

### CONSULTANTS AVAILABLE FOR EXPERT ACCESS

Accounting & Taxes:  
**J. Christian Manalli**

Legal:  
**Adam Glazer**

Executive Searches:  
**Carla Mahrt**

Rep & Mfr. Services:  
**Bryan Shirley**

Rep Network Management:  
**Cesare Giammarco**

Sales/Business Strategy:  
**Craig Conrad**

Sales/Business Strategy:  
**Michael Calabria**

Sales/Marketing Strategy:  
**Steve Cholas**

### 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

\* 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:  
Clare Kluck at [ckluck@era.org](mailto:ckluck@era.org).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 COVER STORY  
From the supply chain front lines to the classroom
- 27 FEATURE ARTICLE  
ERA takes a manufacturer from new-comer to nationwide

## COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

- 8 RISING STARS  
Zach Thonen
- 10 SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW  
David Bennington
- 16 WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!
- 12 EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY  
Be the best you can be...now!
- 14 NEW MEMBERS
- 16 FROM THE TOP  
Manufacturers' rep best practices
- 18 ERA XCOM DIGEST  
- Rep Update  
- Membership Update  
- Education Update  
- Manufacturing Update  
- Industry Update
- 23 TALKING TAXES  
Tax deductions for your home office
- 24 LEGALLY SPEAKING  
When family agreement is breached, neither rep's wife nor principals gets off "scott"-free
- 28 CHAPTER NEWS
- 30 NEWS BEAT
- 31 MEMBER SERVICES
- 32 CLASSIFIED ADS

A Berkshire Hathaway Company

1.800.CALL.TTI • [tti.com](http://tti.com)

Don't miss all the services, information and resources available online, 24/7, on ERA's website.  
Visit [era.org](http://era.org).

SUMMER 2025



# FROM THE SUPPLY CHAIN FRONT LINES TO THE CLASSROOM

Practical and academic insights into global  
supply chain challenges and solutions  
from an executive-turned-professor

## COVER STORY

*This interview with Professor Gregory Collins, MBA, Arizona State University is a dive into the world of supply chain management from both a business and classroom perspective. Conducted in May 2025 at the EDS Summit, this discussion illuminates both the academic and practical facets of the field. Professor Collins shares insights into the curriculum at ASU, the diverse career paths available to supply chain professionals and the evolving landscape of global trade. From his early career in China to his current role, he offers a unique perspective on the complexities and opportunities within the supply chain industry.*

**Q:** Tell us a little bit about the supply chain department and curriculum at Arizona State University.

**A:** In our department, about half of the professors are career research professors who have their Ph.D., and focus on some specific area of the supply chain to research. The other half of us are typically former executives that teach students how to apply knowledge, whether it's procurement logistics, how to model it, etc. So, I'm a professional professor-type in the classes that I teach in the undergraduate level. I also teach senior level classes, including the capstone course on supply chain strategy, as well as a course on global supply chain management and you can imagine how fun that class was this year, with the tariffs. We did a lot of modeling — e.g., what would be the impact to a company's financials and their cash-to-cash conversion be, if these components had a different level of tariffs? There's a number of different analytical case studies, but the conversations are just so great with the students. The seniors are very engaged and usually excellent students.

**Q:** How long have you been in the business and what is a bit of your background?

**A:** I just completed my seventh year teaching at ASU. I received my MBA and moved to China in 1982. I then went to work for Microsoft. We built up the Xbox supply chain. It was around that time that China was really sort of developing policy and changing things with free trade zones.

I then started a company in private equity consulting. Banks and private equity were starting to think, how do we build these low-cost supply chains? We were starting to understand it. We were doing acquisitions and mergers, consolidating industries, using a large economy's scale and low-cost premium model that you see everywhere now 30 years later, especially in the electronics industry, as well as industrial products, apparel, toys, shoelaces, everything.

It all happened very quickly and it was interesting being there. I was a kid in a candy store and didn't know what I would be doing the next day. Government and policy changes for imports made it interesting as well, and a learning experience. I lived on planes and in airports for about 10 years, and every time I'd come back to the U.S., I would often end up teaching executive MBA classes or guest teaching in a class for a few weeks at a time. The dean at W.P. Carey School of Business eventually asked me to come on as a professor and that's how I ended up here.

**Q:** How does the supply chain program at ASU provide internship and career opportunities or students?

**A:** Our department at ASU hosts two career fairs every year, and it's run by the faculty advisor for the Supply Chain Management Association, which is a student-led organization. In the fall, they have around 90 companies that come in to recruit students for internships and for full-time employment, and then we have another career fair in the spring. We have a lot of electronics and computer companies that recruit at these fairs. Many of our graduates go to places like Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Amazon and Starbucks. A lot of our graduates stay in the Southwest, Texas, Arizona or West Coast, from Washington through Silicon Valley.

**Q:** In a broader sense, what are supply chain experts and researchers studying and focusing on right now?

**A:** Coming out of COVID and the resulting shortages, coupled with the geopolitical issues that have been going on since 2008, we are now in an age of "slo-bilization." The financial crisis in 2008 made companies start to look at how to descale and how to model risk and adopt policies like "China plus 1," which means moving some manufacturing to Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, etc., in addition to China. This has resulted in a much more regionalized trade flow, rather than a completely free trade world. You are seeing more bilateral-type trade agreements that are changing the trade flows of products. This impacts supply chains upstream and downstream, and companies are really having to invest in supply chain strategy experts to focus on this.

**Q:** Outsourcing was the battle cry 20 years ago, and now the battle cry seems to be reshoring and moving manufacturing back to the U.S. How easy or difficult would this be?

**A:** In terms of moving supply chains away

Interview by Clare Kluck,  
Representor Editor

(continued on page 6)

The Representor | Summer 2025



COVER STORY: From the supply chain frontlines to the classroom

(continued from previous page)

from China or back to the U.S., China in general has always been used to getting business. Are they really going to say, “Oh yeah, no problem, we want to lose all this revenue and we’re going to help you move to Vietnam or India?” And these second and third tier supply chains and ecosystems are very difficult to replicate anywhere else.

Financial pundits and politicians and others often don't understand the complexity of these situations. Reshoring or nearshoring sounds convenient, but it takes years to build supply chains and it's very difficult to just turn on a switch and move them. There's also the issue of talent. Where is your talent and your workforce?

The *Wall Street Journal* recently reported there's a half-million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. that are unfilled. It's very difficult to recruit people, especially skilled labor. It's also worth mentioning that in 2024, only 8 percent of the GDP of the U.S. was manufacturing. We are a heavily service-oriented economy.

**Q: How did the CHIPS Act make it easier or harder to fix or strengthen supply chains?**

**A:** At Intel, right down the street from ASU, they do the fabrication work. But the average semiconductor, especially micro-processors, travel roughly 55 million kilometers around the world before it gets back into the hands of consumers because it needs to complete all these different steps in all of those areas.

I was in Panama last summer and was invited to this government meeting where they talked about the CHIPS Act and money that flowed to Costa Rica and Panama for semiconductor manufacturing. One of the very difficult things in the process is the assembly and test. After you complete the fabrication of the semiconductor, it may travel to a low-cost region with lower-cost labor and then after that, it might go to Germany to be built into a specific module before it ends up coming back to the U.S. It involves a lot of skilled labor and moving all of that to the U.S. is almost like moving shoelace manufacturing — it's very difficult.

**Q: What are some best practices for building a more resilient and agile electronics component supply, in your view?**

**A:** I'd say building better predictive analytics and integrated data systems. I'd say about half of my students are also studying

business data and analytics, along with supply chain management. Many companies still have regionalized data in procurement or logistics. Having a more integrated system would allow for companies to use more predictive measures and have end-to-end visibility, allowing them to answer questions like, where do we keep our buffer inventory and what is really the risk of something happening? This helps build resilience. The goal is always to reduce uncertainty and reduce risk. Supply chains are like living ecosystems, where if one part changes, it will cause a change or response from the other parts.

**Q: What do you think are the critical skills needed in your student body for their future in supply chain careers?**

**A:** I would say emerging technologies like predictive planning technologies that have more scenario analysis built into it. AI is great but it has to be trained over time and you have to feed the AI tool a large body of data before it will be useful. And of course, there's the obvious desire to automate standardized processes like procurement, and that's nothing new.

**Q: Do you see any return to total cost of ownership and the Deming Quality Initiative versus purchase price variance, a.k.a focusing on the lowest price?**

**A:** A lot of times companies will say, here are my suppliers and here are my components and do I make these for the lowest cost per unit with my suppliers? If they add competition in, they could get an even lower cost and more profit. That is purchase price variance. That is versus saying, let's look at the total cost of ownership of the whole supply chain and optimize the cost of a whole supply chain, not just one piece.

Take Walmart, for example. The Walmart CEO just came out and said with the new tariffs coming in, they are not going to raise prices on everything, but perhaps some things. So they are looking at it from an overall cost perspective, rather than going pound for pound on each individual item. Everybody wants a return to total cost of ownership, especially CEOs and CFOs.

But if I'm a frontline purchasing manager, how do I make a name for myself and how do I get my personal bonus? I get the best purchase price variance from my suppliers and then I'm a hero because I've saved the company a lot of money on this one part. ■



*Professor Gregory Collins, MBA, has taught in the undergraduate, MBA and executive programs at the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University for seven years as a professor of global supply chain and operations strategy. Collins is founder and chief supply chain officer of The Lakeline Group, the Shanghai-based firm specializing in reshoring and nearshoring, private equity investment and consulting. He has held C-suite supply chain positions with Flextronics and Gerber and lived in China for many years. Collins was awarded the Key of Shanghai and the 2008 Beijing Olympics Award, and was honored in the Great Hall of the People by Chinese President Hu Jin Tao in 2004.*

**TAEJIN Technology**  
HTC Korea

Semiconductor IC Manufacturer  
**TAEJIN Technology Co., Ltd.**

# WE ARE STABLE

**TAEJIN** completes reliable power supply systems with its high-quality power IC Products

- Full Line-up of Linear Regulators
- Multi-Channel Linear Regulators
- DDR Terminators & OCP ICs
- High Voltage Non-Sync. DC-DC Converters
- DC-DC Converters & Controllers
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter
- RS-232 / RS-485 Interface ICs
- Logics, Timers, Amps, Comps, and Drivers

**TEL**  
+82-2-553-9620

**FAX**  
+82-2-553-9645

**Email**  
us@htckorea.co.kr

**WEB**  
<https://www.htckorea.co.kr>

**LOCATION**  
2F, Samjeong Building, 553, Nonhyeon-ro, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, 06126, Korea







Zach Thonen  
 Director of Marketing  
 LuscomBridge

To gain better insight into how early career professionals in the electronics industry have turned challenges into opportunities to ensure continued growth, The Representor interviewed Zach Thonen, director of marketing at LuscomBridge.

He shared how playing in a cover band led him to this industry, how he uses AI tools to keep up to speed and why rep firms should leverage early career people's technical capabilities more.

Please tell us a little bit about yourself, personally and professionally.

I sing and play guitar in a death metal band and play guitar in a tribute band to The Cure. I studied in Sweden for a year, and lived in China for three years. I'm told my Mandarin is somewhere between incredible and incomprehensible. I love traveling, experiencing things and meeting people you can't find at home, and being inspired by what people have accomplished around the world and throughout history.

My role at LuscomBridge has evolved into a marketing and new business outreach-focused role. I support our sales team by collaborating with our principal RSMs and marketing managers, as well as our field sales team, to create and deploy industry/application-focused marketing campaigns. I also manage our marketing database of over 20K contacts, and provide internal sales support tools, accrue new contacts and identify areas for operational improvement.

How long have you worked in the electronics industry?

I started in December of 2020, at the height of COVID-19, doing market research as an intern. Eventually I began engaging with customers and getting hands-on sales experience, before finding my niche role in marketing & outreach-focused sales support.

What made you choose this industry as your current career path?

I actually learned of this industry through the singer from my Cure band. In fact, I joined the band in part as a secret plan to prove my reliability to our singer as a means of breaking into this industry — it worked!

My career as a manufacturers' rep allows me to work with smaller, more dynamic teams where I can influence decision making, implement new ideas and apply myself critically. Supporting customers allows me to be a (very) small part of some amazing, innovative projects, and again, it's amazing to see what people can accomplish. Lastly, electronic component sales/marketing feels like one of the few areas of sales/marketing where you get to actually help an individual solve a problem.

What are some of the main challenges you have encountered as you embark on your career journey?

One of the biggest challenges coming into this industry is being able to quickly wrap my head around numerous technologies, and learning how to communicate about them meaningfully without overextending myself.

What steps have you taken to overcome these challenges and ensure that you can establish and nurture a successful career?

Research, detailed note-taking and collaboration have been the key to maintaining technological accuracy. I consult a principal's resources first, and pair this with an AI tool like Gemini to ask general questions about the technology and to learn what the primary concerns of relevant engineers would be. I take notes in a program called Obsidian, which has deep customizability and allows me to be extremely organized for recalling info at later times.

What are some training tools or networking/industry events that you have found beneficial to your professional growth?

For me, the most helpful tool is the most direct and clearly defined outline of a manufacturer's products and strengths. Webinars and trainings are great for case studies or telling a story about your company or product. However, if I'm going to start putting rubber to the road as quickly as possible, I want you to give me the training wheels. I often create these types of outlines myself.

I developed an internal tool for LuscomBridge that we call "battle cards" which are essentially one-page documents that outline a manufacturer's product types with significant specs, USPs or questions to ask engineers, DR program info and info on competitors. It provides a one-stop place to get your bearings before a customer call or meeting.

Do you think that there is enough new talent entering the electronics industry? What could make this field more attractive to young professionals?

I was very fortunate to receive a lot of help from others getting into this industry. The job market right now is absolutely brutal, and I know there are lots of smart, talented young people who would love to receive a lifting hand from more experienced adults around them.

Our industry can be very slow moving, and that can make it difficult to establish yourself as a new rep, and for firms to take on new hires. However, one area we've seen rapid development is in how reps utilize technology to reach and engage with customers. Where once walk-ins and cold calls were great for growing new business, now we compete for customers' attention through a multitude of asynchronous methods and mediums. An understanding of emerging technologies and an experimental approach are key to growing in this environment, and this is exactly where I think young people can create immediate value for rep firms

(continued on page 31)



# RESTORING FORESTS. REVIVING BIODIVERSITY.

Turn everyday business into a force for good.  
 With every purchase of Green Stock, you help rebuild forests, protect wildlife, and create a more sustainable future.

Scan to turn your excess into a sustainable and profitable opportunity.







**David Bennington**  
Vice President of Sales  
Knight Electronics/Orion Fans

*With so many ERA members, it is not easy to get to know every rep, manufacturer and distributor 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 Bennington, vice president of sales at Knight Electronics/Orion Fans.*

*The Representor asked Bennington a few questions about his time in the electronics manufacturing business. Here is what he had to say.*

**Tell us a little bit about yourself.**

My dad worked for a major oil company when I was growing up so my older sister and I moved around a bit. I was born in Tulsa and spent time in Casper, Kansas City and Chicago, but have been in Dallas for 25 years. I took a job down in Dallas and moved down here from Chicago to be closer to my parents. Having said that, I am a Kansas City Chiefs, Cubs (NL) and a Blackhawks fan as I enjoyed going to these games and still do when I get the chance.

Funny story — I lived here in Dallas for about a year and a half before I met my wife. We met at a birthday party of a girl I took out the night before! We have one daughter who is going into her senior year at University of Arkansas. (What’s really cool is we share the same birthday – best birthday present ever!)

**How long have you been in the manufacturing business?**

Wow! I am really going to date myself. I left Newark Electronics where I was a corporate supplier manager in 1997 and I began my career in the electronics manufacturing world as a national distribution manager for a company called CP Clare at the time. This particular role was in Chicago where I managed the corporate distributor relationships as well as interacted with manufacturers’ reps when engaging the distributor field personnel.

When I moved to Dallas in 2000, it was with a different company and role – Optek Technology, Inc. as global distribution manager. I was single at the time and was very fortunate to get to travel all over Europe for business and some pleasure. (Optek went to market through the rep community too, so I got introduced to a couple of reps who ended up being my mentors and still are to this day).

**How did you become interested in the electronics industry?**

I was in Chicago working for Sears Roebuck & Co. and was getting bored of being a new store coordinator and literally answered an ad for a corporate product manager role with Newark Electronics. Several months later, I found myself sitting behind a desk at the old Ravenswood facility working for them.

I handled two handfuls of suppliers and learned about their products within the electronics world, which at the time was all new to me and very exciting all at the same time. Almost 30 years later, I haven’t – and won’t – leave the industry.

**What have you found to be most rewarding about the business?**

First, the people. I have been very fortunate to meet so many interesting and fascinating people who I have either worked with, worked for or just worked around. It didn’t matter if they worked for a manufacturer, manufacturers’ rep or a distributor, I got to know a lot of people.

Secondly, the technology we see. I might be old school in the fact that when I visit customers (with reps and/or distributors), I really like when I can walk about in the lab or production area/backroom. It’s amazing to see some of the applications that ultimately make it to market, and I can say, “I saw that being designed/built!”

**Briefly describe your organization.**

Knight Electronics is a family-owned business located in Dallas, Texas, and we have three brands – Orion Fans, Knight EMS and IoAudio Technologies. Our company was founded in 1979 by Bob Knight. The company is now run by his son John Knight, who is a Merchant Marine Academy grad and logistics expert. We have 35 employees and a 50,000-square-foot warehouse at this location as well, which houses the most on-hand inventory of any fan manufacturer on the planet.

The majority of our manufacturing is done in Taiwan, as we have transitioned almost all of our business out of China.

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

We have reached several major technology milestones since 2020 here at Knight:

- New phone system: Enabled seamless work-from-home capability during lockdowns — and continues to support flexible work today when someone must be out.
- Sage ERP upgrades: We added multi-bin barcoding, vastly improving inventory accuracy and warehouse efficiency and are in process of adding an “on the water” module to streamline receiving and warehousing.
- New POS tool with Budde Marketing: A game-changer in how we view our distributors’ customer transactions.
- Buddy CRM system: Our new CRM platform gives us a full 360-degree view of our customers, helping us boost sales, track activity and improve customer satisfaction.
- EDI implementation: We’ve taken a major step forward with automated order

(continued from page 10)

- processing, improving speed and reducing errors.
  - Rep management upgrades: We replaced RPMS with Repfabric, and now Manufabric helps us track rep sales and commissions with precision.
- For a company our size, these enhancements have really allowed us to “punch above our weight” and keep improving the way we do business and go to market.

**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?**

Walter and his team have done a fantastic job growing the ERA organization from where it was just 3-4 years ago to what it is today. It’s allowed its members to not only network and learn best practices for reps, but also manufacturers and distributors to do their jobs more efficiently than in the past. (The wait list the last two years to attend the ERA Conference is a testament to their focus and dedication).

It is so impressive to click on the “Resources” tab on ERA.org to find a plethora of tools to assist or inform the members on how to grow in their roles and responsibilities.

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

As people know, the Texas summers are brutally hot so I enjoy boating and lounging by the pool to help cool off and pass the time away. Having attended a Big Ten school and with my daughter at an SEC university, the fall is all about college football and tailgating – whether watching in person or with friends is a lot of fun. I also try to squeeze in a round or two of golf occasionally.

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

Before my wife and I got married, we were part of the DFW Golden Retriever Rescue where we were Board members and actively involved in fostering golden retrievers. After we left the organization, we counted that we had fostered 41 dogs between our two households. They are such great dogs and we finally adopted one when we got married that our daughter grew up with for almost eight years. Right now we own a three-year old English Cream Golden. ■

 +  **Empowering Systems**

# Have Joined forces

**Driving Innovation**

**Delivering Outstanding Value**

**Uniting Strengths**

**Developing Deeper Feature Sets**

**Combining Expertise**

**For more information** | [repfabric.com](https://repfabric.com)  
[empoweringsystems.com](https://empoweringsystems.com)

## Be the best you can be...now!



by **Walter E. Tobin**  
ERA CEO  
wtobin@era.org  
T: 617-901-4088

EDS 2025 is now in the history books – did you go? Did you get a lot done? Have you reviewed your notes and action items? Have you reached out to those folks who represent the business cards sitting on your desk just waiting to be followed up on or responded to? Remember: the “follow up” shelf life is 2-4 weeks after any event or meeting. After that, don’t bother. You missed the window and wasted your time at the event or at the meeting. All of your travel woes, dinners, full days and nights will now be wasted. Remember the saying: “Never confuse activity with accomplishment.” You ran around for five days, but what did you get done?

What was the mood at EDS? Excitement? Candor? Nervousness? Are the other companies in my space doing better than I am? If so, why? Do I even believe them? Should I tell the truth when I am asked: “How’s your business? How is your year going?”

I sensed a lot of enthusiasm at EDS. Perhaps, if we tell each other a few fibs, perhaps we can all believe that things are indeed getting better! End-customer inventory seems to be leveling off; lead times are falling; book-to-bills are getting back in the positive ranges. So why am I not seeing the uptick? Or am I?

The topic of tariffs was also never-ending. What should we charge? How much can we lose if eating some or all of the tariff? What is my competition doing? What if my customer agrees to pay the tariff and then short-pays the invoice, paying only for the piece part and not for the tariff? Should I/can I put them on credit hold? What if they are my biggest customer?

The whole tariff discussion does have a bit of a silver lining: we are getting audiences with senior managers at our customers that we have never gotten! They want to understand our position and/or try and leverage their size and relationship with us to avoid paying any tariff. (Is that fair?) How we handle ourselves at these senior-level meetings will have a long-term impact on our presence at the customer.

Frankly, so many of us are just tired of this uncertainty and waiting for something to happen, for someone to declare: The market has turned! Happy days are here again!

There are now so many indices that represent how the market is doing. Book-to-bill ratio, lead times, end customer inventory levels, imports/exports levels, unemployment levels,

new jobs created/lost, interest rates, deficit levels, inflation levels, interest rates...enough! How can I make sense of all of this? What is up is now down and what used to be good may now be bad. Sometimes I think we all need to just stop. Or at least pause.

We all know what our organization needs to do now to make it better:

- Plan for the future. Invest in new productivity tools – funnel management, lead follow up, etc.
- Use AI in all areas of your business – what are you waiting for?
- Train our people – when was the last time you did any training?
- Enhance your digital image.
- Hold performance reviews to help lower performers get better or have them exit the business — when was the last time you even did performance reviews?

The old maxim was that when business got tough, the three areas that most companies cut back on were advertising/marketing, travel and entertainment (customer visits) and training. Shouldn’t these be the three areas that you want/NEED to invest in?

Stop waiting for an excuse to put off these critical areas because when the market does turn, you will be stuck with the same systems, productivity tools, digital image, poorly trained sales teams and non-performing employees.

There is a saying: “A rising tide raises all boats.” Rising sales covers up a lot of barnacles and holes in any boat. Whew! Thank goodness no one saw how bad my boat was...but the high tides now cover a lot of sins.

When was the last time you asked your customers/manufacturers to do a review of your company? How are you doing for them?

Have you ever proactively flown to visit your manufacturers’ headquarters to tell them what you are doing now for them, and then asked them for their feedback?

You want to stand out from all of your other competitors. Separate yourself from those who are calcified from fear of taking action.

Work now to make your company and your people stand out. Be the best you can be – invest, hire, train, improve! Be positioned now to be ahead of your competition when the market does turn. ■

ESTABLISHED IN 2005

# Electronics Sourcing

THE MAGAZINE FOR PURCHASING PROFESSIONALS

Register now to  
receive your **FREE**  
print copy that covers  
the North American  
Supply Chain

## Subscribe today!

Scan the QR Code to  
receive your **FREE** copy!

[www.electronics-sourcing.com](http://www.electronics-sourcing.com)







These companies have joined ERA since the Spring 2025 issue of **The Representor**.

**REPRESENTATIVES**

- Alliance Rep Brazil**  
Juliano Pereira  
*South America*  
allrepbr.com.br
- C & N Associates**  
Peter Cop  
*Southern California*  
cnassoc.com
- Discovery Technical Sales**  
Mike McCool  
*Pacific Northwest*  
dtsnw.com
- Everest Sales & Solutions**  
Arturo Andrade  
*Mexico*  
everestss.com
- Expect More Sales, LLC**  
Molly Morrison  
*Indiana/Kentucky*  
expectmoresales.com
- Gateway International Components**  
Nick Visic  
*Southwest*  
gicomponents.com
- MC Controls**  
Mike Jett  
*Spirit of St. Louis*  
mccontrols.com

- Metz Jade Associates**  
Mark Kieft  
*Mid-Lantic*  
metzjade.com
- QREP Inc.**  
Charles Bevan  
*Florida*  
qrepinc.com
- Tempest Technical Sales**  
Kevin Chatterton  
*Indiana/Kentucky*  
tempesttechsales.com
- Alps Alpine North America, Inc.**  
Channing Coy  
alpsalpije.com/e/
- Antenna Company International NV**  
Norman Smith  
antennacompany.com
- Bernd Richter, an Amphenol Company**  
Kurt Grainger  
bernd-richter-gmbh.com/
- Caerus Power Technology, LLC**  
Tadmor Ganir  
caeruspower.com
- Citel**  
Jill Cole  
citel.us/en

- MV-Electronics**  
Shiraz Vakharia  
mv-electronics.com
- MJM Industries, Inc.**  
Russ Herbert  
mjmindustries.com
- Sanbor Corp.**  
Wayne Meng  
sanbormfg.com
- SensComp, Inc.**  
Margaret Bezerko  
senscomp.com
- Toshiba America Electronic Components Inc.**  
Maxine Bressler  
toshiba.semicon-storage.com
- Trigon Components**  
Jeff Low  
trigoncomponents.com

**MANUFACTURERS**

**ERA Member Service Action Lines**  
Scan QR code for a full listing of ERA Member Services information:



**Consultants Available for Expert Access**  
Accounting & Taxes: J. Christian Manalli.....312-648-2300  
Executive Searches: Carla Mahrt.....402-721-6590  
Legal: Adam Glazer.....312-648-2300  
Rep & Mfr. Services: Bryan Shirley, CPMR.....267-620-6000  
Rep Network Mgmt.: Cesare Giammarco.....401-595-7331  
Sales/Business Strategy: Craig Conrad..... 817-917-8268  
Sales/Marketing Strategy: Steve Cholas..... 949-413-1732  
Sales/Business Strategy: Michael Calabria.....mjalabria7@gmail.com

- ERA Services & Resources**  
(Call 312-419-1432 or visit ERA.org.)
- ERA SearchLink.ai
  - ERA HoverMap - An Online Directory of Manufacturers' Reps
  - Lines Available Service
  - ERA LIVE
  - ERA Talks (Podcast)
  - ERA Member Surveys
  - ERA Bulletin Board
  - POS Reports
  - ERA Logos

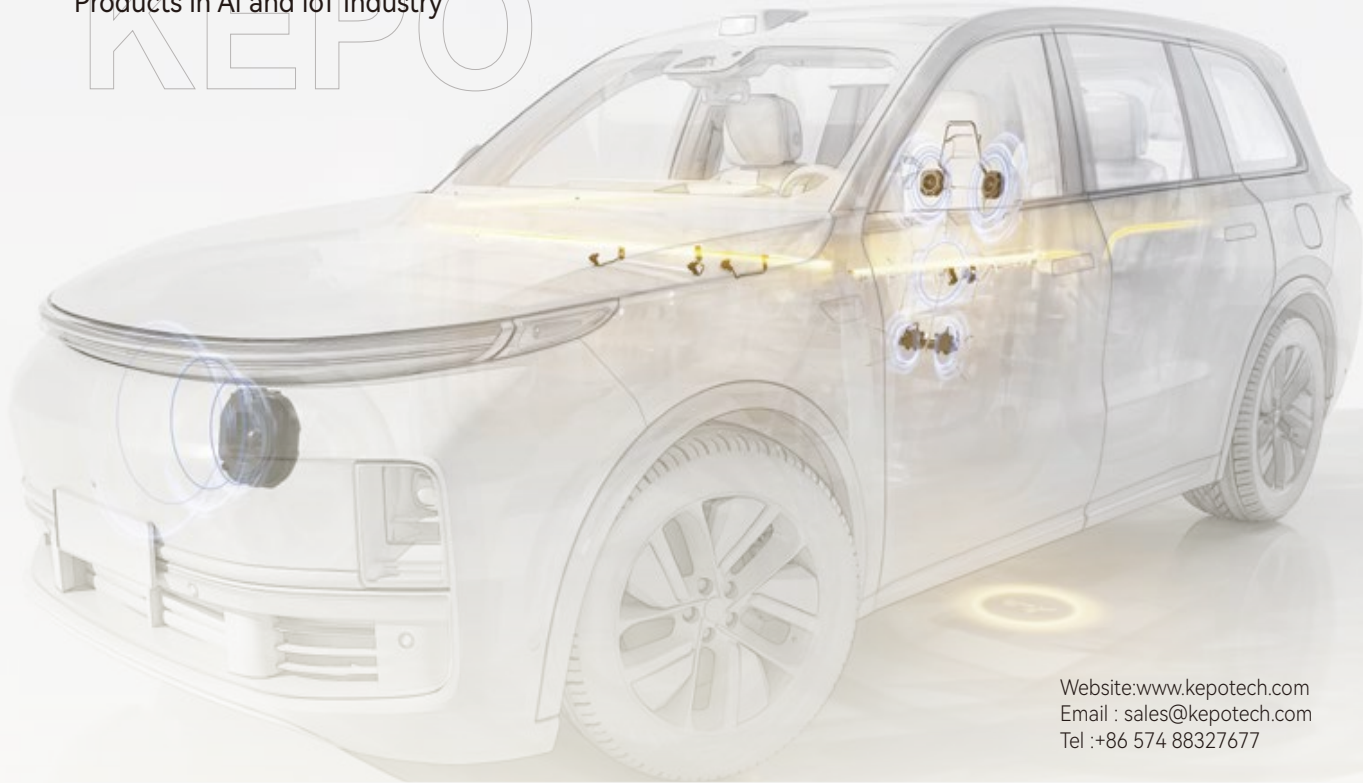
- ERA White Papers & Industry Standards**  
(Visit ERA.org for details.)
- NEW - "Why Choose a Manufacturer's Rep?" Video
  - NEW - Selling Effectively Through Manufacturers' Reps
  - Manufacturers' Rep Toolkit
  - Powering Up Your Brand: Strategies for Successful Marketing and Branding in the Electronics Industry
  - The Solution to Cost-Effective Sales Coverage is Hiding in Plain Sight
  - Staying on Course – Tips for More Effective Manufacturer/Representative Quarterly Meetings
  - Rep to Manufacturer Communication: Reinforcing the Mutual Value
  - Introduction to Manufacturers' Reps
  - Line Conflicts: Navigating to a Mutually Beneficial Resolution
  - Thriving on Change 2014: How the Field Sales Function Keeps Evolving
  - Guidelines to Planning a Territory Visit
  - Developing New Markets with Professional Field Sales Reps
  - POS – Recommended Technical Standards for Distribution Point-of-Sale Reporting
  - Split Influence (Commission) Recommendations for the Electronics Industry
  - Split Commission Request Form, in Excel format

**ERA Meetings & Programs**  
Sales Training for Electronics Professionals (STEP).....Oct. 7-9  
Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT).....Nov. 11-13  
ERA Conference.....Feb. 22-24, 2026

# KEPO TECHNOLOGIES

## ARCHITECT OF INTELLIGENT CABIN & AUTO-DRIVING

Solutions for Customizing HMI Components & Parts, Modules and intelligent Products in AI and IoT Industry



Website:www.kepotech.com  
Email : sales@kepotech.com  
Tel :+86 574 88327677



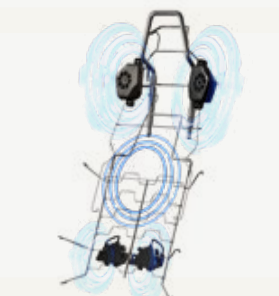
### Acoustic Products-Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System

- By simulating engine sounds or customizing warning sounds, the vehicle's (especially low-speed driving) perceptibility to pedestrians and cyclists is significantly improved, reducing the risk of traffic accidents.
- Comply with global government regulations regarding electric vehicles.
- Suitable for various types of electric vehicles, including passenger cars, commercial vehicles, and public transportation.
- Provide customized acoustic solutions.



### Optical Products-Interior And ExteriorAmbient Lights

- Provide customized lighting solutions for automotive interior and exterior decoration--- LED logo, door sill lights, cnsl ambient lights, vanity mirror lights,cup holder lights,door warning light, etc.
- Supports CAN/LIN for logical communication and control, enabling functions such as color temperature control,brightness control, color control, and music interaction.
- Customized solutions have been provided for some launched car models.



### Seat 4D Exciter System

- Integrated 4D seat Exciter system brings innovative tactile experience.
- Efficient low-frequency vibration output, paired with headrest speakers, creates an immersive driving experience.
- Match different car models and output customized solutions.





by Tom Griffin, CPMR  
Catalyst Unity Solutions  
ERA Board President  
tgriffin@catalyst-sales.com

# Manufacturers' rep best practices

We spend a lot of time at Catalyst Unity Solutions working on and promoting our brand, and ensuring our employees own the brand. An important part of this effort is communicating to new employees, and reminding experienced employees, about best practices. These include everything from call reports to emails, virtual meetings and principal visits and reviews.

Our best practices presentation has remained unchanged for years, until recently. Ken Bellerio, formerly of Schaffner and a member of the ERA Executive Committee, assembled ERA's Manufacturers Executive Council for its ideas on what they view as rep best practices.

Their list is brief, but impactful.

**Rep digital marketing programs** come highly recommended by the group. The group agreed these programs should be funded by the reps, but support materials should be provided by the manufacturer.

**Rep report cards** — The Council requested to start a process to standardize

manufacturers' rep report cards. The idea is to use these as a guideline for rep performance. It should include targets based on opportunities.

**Succession planning** is a best practice for both reps and manufacturers. Both parties should work to have a plan in place, and communicate that plan regularly.

**Rep website content standardization** — The Council agreed that manufacturers' rep websites should include a listing of all their lines, and even links back to the manufacturers' sites.

The work of this group resulted in our company improving our presentations, as well as adding this list to our best practices presentation shared internally.

I hope you find the work of this prestigious group as beneficial as we at Catalyst did.

Our thanks to ERA Manufacturers Council members Ken Bellerio, Caroline Wells, Holly Good, Robert Derringer, David Bennington and Bob Gourdeau. ■



# 2026 ERA Conference Volunteers

ERA extends its thanks to these distinguished and dedicated volunteers who are serving on the 2026 Conference Core Committee and Subcommittees. This group gives selflessly of their time, and their commitment to developing a dynamic and valuable program is deeply appreciated.

Save the date! The next ERA Conference is scheduled for February 22-24, 2026 in Austin, TX. Registration and sponsorships will open mid-August! Visit [www.era.org](http://www.era.org) for more information.

## 2026 CONFERENCE CORE COMMITTEE

Perry Thornton, Pinnacle Marketing  
— Conference Committee Chair

Julie Carr, MacInnis Group  
— Conference Committee Vice Chair

Adam Anderson, CPMR,  
Norris & Associates, Inc.

Holly Good, Master Electronics  
Ellen Coan, CPMR, C C Electro Sales, Inc.  
Todd McAtee, Mouser Electronics

Zach Anderson, Harper and Two

Heather D'Amico, CPMR  
Brainard Nielsen Marketing Inc.

Adam Grigor, Tech-Trek Ltd.

Scott Lindberg, Quell Corporation

## 2026 CONFERENCE SUBCOMMITTEES

### Breakout Sessions Committee

Adam Anderson, CPMR,  
Norris & Associates, Inc. — Co-chair  
Holly Good, Master Electronics — Co-chair  
Ryan Baldinelli, Anderson Power Products  
Emily Bannister, C C Electro Sales, Inc.  
Mary Benetti-Condon, Bel Fuse Inc.  
Joe Braun, EK Micro  
Graeme Dorkings, TTI, Inc.  
Cesare Giammarco, Sales Management Consulting LLC  
Timothy Griffin, Sensata Technologies  
Arthur Guerra, Brainard Nielsen Marketing Inc.  
Blake Johnson, Genie Group  
Tim Kilfoil, JF Kilfoil Company  
Jason Lipps, Knowles Electronics, LLC  
Holly Myers, Sager Electronics  
Jennifer Riehle, Arrow Electronics  
Mike Walsh, Coakley Boyd & Abbett, Inc.  
Tom Wichert, TDK Lambda Americas Inc.

### Sponsorship Committee

Adam Grigor, Tech-Trek Ltd. — Co-chair  
Scott Lindberg, Quell Corporation — Co-chair  
Madison Armstrong, Genie Group, Inc.  
Lori Bruno, CPMR, LuscomBridge

Lou Copley, Avnet, Inc.  
Rob DeRose, CST-Arwin  
Lisa Dietrich, Conley & Associates, Inc.  
Dave Foster, Ohmite Manufacturing Co.  
John Guetens, E-T-A Engineering Technology  
Chris Hodge, ANRO Associates  
Byron Holloway, Fralia Co. & Assoc., Inc.  
John Hutson, CPMR, MacInnis Company  
Bruce Kellar, Sager Electronics  
Toby Lasley, Ion Associates, Inc.  
Brooks Mattice, CPMR, TMC-A Mel Foster Company  
Frank Mazzone, NorComp  
John O'Brien, CPMR, Coakley Boyd & Abbett, Inc.  
Tom Rau, Mouser Electronics  
Amy Rooney, RFMW, Ltd.  
Gary Smith, CPMR,  
G.L. Smith Associates, Inc.  
Hunter Starr, CPMR,  
Performance Technical Sales, LLC  
Tony Tomasso, Panasonic Industrial Devices Sales Co of America  
Carlos Unda, ATL Electronics Ltd.  
Greg Warren, Brandel-Stephens & Co., Inc.  
Bryan White, CPMR, Catalyst Unity Solutions

### Keynote/General Sessions Committee

Zach Anderson, Harper and Two — Co-chair  
Heather D'Amico, CPMR, Brainard Nielsen Marketing Inc. — Co-chair  
Ellen Albright, E-T-A Engineering Technology  
Carleigh Baughman, Quell Corporation  
Ryker Brown, Arrow Electronics, Inc.  
Brad Burroughs, Dupont Laird  
Felix Cabañas, Kruvand de Mexico  
Damien Croft, NorComp  
Erin Fox, TAARCOM  
Mike Hensley, Mouser Electronics, Inc.  
Mallorie Merchant, R. C. Merchant & Co., Inc.  
Jake Metzger, Hughes-Peters  
Shane Recicar, CBC Electronics Inc.  
Aparna Sproelich, CPMR,  
Aurora Technical Group - RTP  
Ed Thurmes, Mel Foster Company  
Val Volmar, Waldom Electronics  
Jerry Watson, CPMR, Mel Foster Company

### Conference Committee Advisor

Todd McAtee, Mouser Electronics

### ERA Executive Committee Liaison

Ellen Coan, CPMR, C C Electro Sales, Inc.



## LEGAL ADVICE AVAILABLE FOR ERA REPS

Call or email to schedule a complimentary 20-minute initial consultation with NO obligation. Just mention ERA.

Speak with seasoned sales rep attorneys Adam J. Glazer, Esq. and Adam C. Maxwell, Esq.

SFBBG has safeguarded the interests of independent sales reps for decades.

ERA members can confidently reach out to SFBBG, the "Go-To Law Firm" for sales reps nationwide.

- ✓ Recovering unpaid or underpaid commissions
- ✓ Purchase, sale or merger of your rep firm
- ✓ Issues with your existing written or oral sales rep agreement
- ✓ Succession planning
- ✓ Preparation or negotiating of a rep, sub-rep or employment contract
- ✓ Other legal or business issues

Forward Thinking | Strategic Counsel

(312)-648-2300  
adam.glazer@sfbbg.com  
nationalsalesrepattorneys.com  
Schoenberg Finkel Beederman Bell Glazer, LLC  
300 S. Wacker Dr. 15th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606

## OHMITE IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE VERMONT AS OUR NEW MANUFACTURER'S REPRESENTATIVE IN BRAZIL





REP UPDATE

Cameron English, CPMR  
President, English Technical  
Sales, Southwest  
Sr. Vice President, Industry  
cenglish@englishsales.com

The psychology of  
sales professionals in  
a disruptive economy:  
Maintaining motivation  
and performance



In the world of sales, performance isn't just about numbers—it's about mindset, resilience and emotional intelligence. Sales professionals operate at the intersection of psychology and strategy, relying on drive, interpersonal acuity and adaptability to succeed. But what happens when the economy becomes volatile, markets shift rapidly and certainty evaporates? A disruptive economy can deeply impact even the most seasoned sales professionals, challenging their motivation, mental well-being and ultimately, performance. You may note, I am making the assumption that your business has been navigating a bumpy path as of late. For my part, I have watched my suppliers blast out urgent memos and call virtual meetings all related to...you guessed it. Tariff nausea.

The psychology of sales professionals

Sales professionals are often high achievers motivated by clear goals, competition and financial incentives. Their psychological makeup typically includes:

- Resilience — The ability to bounce back from rejection
- Self-efficacy — Belief in their ability to influence outcomes
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation — A blend of internal drive and external rewards
- Empathy and rapport-building — Crucial for reading clients and tailoring messages
- Goal orientation — Strong alignment with targets and achievement metrics

However, this mindset is vulnerable to external stressors. When economic conditions become uncertain—such as during inflation spikes, tech layoffs, geopolitical instability or supply chain disruption—buyers grow more conservative, sales cycles lengthen and deals become harder to close. This creates a pressure cooker of stress, self-doubt and fatigue for sales professionals.

The impact of a disruptive economy on performance

**Increased anxiety and uncertainty.** Fear of missing quotas or losing accounts becomes amplified when deals stall. Uncertainty erodes confidence and impairs decision-making.

**Loss of motivation.** If past strategies no longer yield results, even high performers can begin to disengage. The connection between effort and reward weakens, sapping intrinsic motivation.

**Burnout and emotional fatigue.** Persistent rejection, stress and unrealistic expectations without sufficient support can lead to burnout, especially when individuals feel isolated or undervalued.

**Cognitive distortions.** Salespeople may fall into negative thinking patterns—catastrophizing (“I’ll never hit quota again”), overgeneralizing (“No one is buying now”) or personalizing (“I must be doing something wrong”).

Here is the interesting part. As manufacturers’ representatives, we have a super weapon: the ability to pivot toward more active and relevant technologies. Sure, realities rule the day and we have to pay attention to our top money-producing suppliers at all costs. Having said that, the recent economic flu in many ways mirrors the impact that COVID-19 had on our industry.

Let’s face it, as sales professionals, we don’t control much, except the critical resources that we have developed over the years: time, talent and relationships. Our customers know that we add a value to their bottom line. If we were to come in with a relevant alternative technology, they would give us a shot. The best thing we can do is look for the alternative value proposition.

In Spencer Johnson’s book, “Who Moved My Cheese?” he calls out several critical strategies for addressing dramatic and volatile change, such as “Adapt quickly!” and “The quicker you let go of old cheese, the sooner you can enjoy new cheese.”

Here is where I want to challenge you. What better model is there in industry than the super entrepreneurial manufacturers’ representative? Name one, I’ll wait...

Strategies to maintain high motivation and morale

**Redefine success.** When the market shifts, traditional KPIs may need to evolve. Shift focus from closed deals alone to leading indicators like meaningful conversations, client engagement and pipeline activity. This sustains a sense of accomplishment and forward momentum.

Tactical tip: Implement tiered goals—daily wins (calls, follow-ups), weekly progress (meetings set) and quarterly outcomes (closed deals). Do not impose “report cards” on your sales team. Report cards smack of insolence and arrogance, reminders of our childhood elementary schools. Instead, set S.M.A.R.T. goals: specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable and time-bound.

**Foster psychological safety and transparency.** Salespeople must feel safe discussing challenges without fear of judgment. In times of disruption, open dialogue about market conditions and collective strategy reinforces trust and teamwork.

Tactical tip: Host weekly “market pulse”

(continued from previous page)

sessions where reps share wins, blockers and insights in a no-blame environment. Senior leadership should participate and listen actively.

**Leverage coaching, not just management.** Coaching focuses on individual development, mindset and confidence—key during downturns. Managers should shift from directive to supportive roles, asking guiding questions and helping reps reframe challenges.

Tactical tip: Use the GROW model (goal, reality, options, will) to structure coaching conversations that help reps self-solve.

**Anchor motivation to purpose.** Money alone won’t sustain drive during uncertain times. Reconnect individuals with the why behind their work—whether that is helping clients solve real problems or supporting their families.

Tactical tip: Create space for personal storytelling—how has your product or service made a meaningful difference? How is each team member’s success connected to something bigger? Every capable electronics sales rep has a great story to tell about their current projects! Focus on the potential future projection, not the current dismal latest volley of trade insults and headlines.

**Celebrate problem solving and ability, not just outcomes.** In disrupted markets, creativity and open-mindedness can be more controllable than results. Recognizing behaviors like resilience, creativity and persistence helps keep morale high.

Tactical tip: Run weekly “effort awards” or spotlight sessions to recognize reps who push through adversity, try new approaches or assist teammates.

**Reinforce team identity and peer support.** Sales can be lonely, especially remotely. Creating peer recognition and camaraderie buffers against emotional dips and maintains collective momentum.

Tactical tip: Set up peer coaching partnerships or small accountability groups that meet regularly to exchange feedback and motivation.

When the market shifts,  
traditional KPIs may need to  
evolve. Shift focus from closed  
deals alone to leading indicators  
like meaningful conversations,  
client engagement and pipeline  
activity. This sustains a sense of  
accomplishment and forward  
momentum.

Leading through disruption with psychology in mind

The rep business is a challenging reality on the psychology of how a person views their current position. Most of us are not in it for the ego boost. We thrive in challenging, independent, demanding and non-stable realities. Many thrive in the representative role because we know we can go further and faster on our own innate talents. Choice is a big reason for many to relish the representative role in our industry. If a supplier is making all the wrong moves in their space, we can shift over to a more responsive and competitive supplier faster than any other profession. And, we can embrace the change with a positive mindset and proactive behavior.

Recently, we faced a dramatic change in our organization when a long-term veteran territory manager left us. The disconcerting part was that he was in a very strategic territory with several highly visible, large and critical accounts. We took a gamble and moved a young newcomer to the territory. Nick was with us a short time, but he had the drive, intellect and willingness to take on a big challenge. Suppliers seemed to really like his style. Within a few weeks, Nick brought an opportunity from an account that the prior sales rep was calling on for years. After we reviewed the quantity and ASP, I said to Nick, “This project has a value of over \$1.5 million!” Nick found an opportunity from an account that was already there, just not approached. In this case, Nick made no assumptions about where to find the cheese, he just went straight at it. We can all learn from this mentality. Change is the only constant. As reps, we have the innate sense and strength of mind to pivot, adapt and build in difficult times.

Ultimately, the best sales strategies in tough times aren’t just tactical—they’re deeply human! ■



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Lori Bruno, CPMR  
Vice President, LuscomBridge  
Sr. Vice President, Membership  
lori@luscombridge.com

The strength and appeal  
of ERA



Beyond my husband, family and our rescue dog, my deepest passion lies with ERA and everything it embodies. When I first joined ERA, I was amazed by the camaraderie, the open exchange of ideas and the profound sense of partnership within the rep community. However, ERA membership extends far beyond a “rep hangout.” It uniquely unites our vital distributor and manufacturing partners, forming what we affectionately call “the three legs of the stool.”

This powerful coming together of all three legs was truly showcased at the 2025 EDS Summit, held in late May at Resorts World in Las Vegas. Every time I passed the ERA booth, I saw Walter Tobin eloquently discussing ERA's value with potential members, or Ama Derringer highlighting the many benefits of joining ERA. It's truly remarkable that over four days, they engaged with

nearly 20 new prospective members. This impressive outreach speaks volumes about the strength and appeal of our organization, reflecting its robust and broad membership of dedicated reps, distributors and manufacturers. These companies join our community, eager to contribute their time and talent to ERA's ongoing evolution.

ERA membership unlocks a variety of benefits. Members gain entry to our annual conference held every February in Austin, and exclusive access to powerful resources such as the highly sought-after Hover Map® and Searchlink.ai. ERA provides extensive educational opportunities to support your ongoing development.

Start at ERA.org! ■

EDUCATION UPDATE

Ellen Coan, CPMR  
C C Electro Sales  
Sr. Vice President/Education  
ellen.coan@ccelectro.net

Making magic



As we move forward in these unprecedented times (this keeps happening!), we find our skills need to keep up with our new normal. ERA offers many educational options to fine-tune your adaptation at all levels. If you are new to the industry, we have networking at the local chapter level or reps meeting quarterly with the ERA NexGen group. Training for the “boots on the ground” from inside sales to marketing to customer service to outside sales and beyond, is virtually presented and recorded with our ERA's virtual STEP training in the fall. In the spring, we offer the national conference to learn about all the ways to stay relevant and lead our teams to the next unprecedented time – or just sell more. ERA LIVE has bi-monthly calls where topics take a deep dive and are discussed in an open format. This is also recorded for later review. Education choices are abundant at ERA.

I find different podcasts or books that put my career in perspective and I try to share them in this column each quarter. This quarter, the book “Make Magic,” by Brad Meltzer, gave me some insight as Meltzer talks about four “tricks” to consider:

- **Making something appear.** This represents bringing more of the things we value into our lives, like authenticity, empathy and gratitude.
- **Making something disappear.** This signifies letting go of things that hold us back, such as negativity and limiting beliefs.

- **Making two things switch places.** This highlights the power of empathy and seeing things from other people's perspectives.
- **Turning one thing into something else.** This is the hardest trick, representing the process of transformation and personal growth.

As I reflected on each of these tricks, I tried to apply them to my day-to-day opportunities and challenges. Making two things switch places was the one that caught my attention as I thought through the demanding customer or difficult manufacturer and tried to see it from their perspective and “help them, help me.” Making things appear is so important every moment of our day as we make sure everyone is seen. The janitor at the truck stop, the intern in the meeting — how many more can we count in a day?

Making things disappear is hard as you hear excuses and obstacles that are not easy to eliminate and yet as we chip away at them, they can be transformed into productive, new processes that work for everyone. And last but not least, turning one thing into something else with personal growth. We never stop learning and growing. How many examples can you tie to each trick?

Stop to relax your shoulders and take a breath while making sure you are moving forward with your peers in an industry like no other. Together we are better. ■

Tariffs.

Is there another word that, when mentioned in conversation with a supplier, rep, distributor or customer, triggers more headshakes, eye rolls or just plain looks of exhaustion?

Exhaustion pretty much sums it up for me.

In the spring issue of *The Representor*, I referenced the “circle of concern” —those factors outside our control, like tariffs. While we can't influence their presence, we certainly can't ignore their impact. As a supplier sourcing from four different countries of origin—including China—this latest challenge has cost our company time, resources and money. As it has many of you.

Worst of all, it's pulled our attention away from revenue-generating activity.

As a supplier and importer of record, our immediate attention was focused on one thing. We had a responsibility to recover the thousands of dollars we were sending weekly to the U.S. Treasury. The original tariffs on Chinese goods, implemented in 2020, had long been baked into our landed costs—no separate line items, no add-ons—essentially invisible to our customers.

That all changed in April.

New, higher tariffs on China—alongside a broader application of duties on other countries—hit our industry broadside. With the added uncertainty of temporary percentages and paused reciprocal increases, we could no longer treat tariffs as just another fixed cost of doing business.

It was time to reevaluate. Quickly.

We can't control tariffs, but we can control how we respond—and that's where our industry shines.

Our immediate challenge at E-T-A? We had no system in place to apply tariff charges to invoices. Fortunately, our IT team quickly developed a temporary process that allowed us to begin applying them within weeks' time.

Our default approach was simple: pass through the percentage we were being charged and add a subtitled “Tariff” line on invoices. That worked—until it didn't. Push-back and special requests soon followed.

But, as is often the case in our industry, shared challenges lead to collaboration. ERA

*We can't control tariffs, but we can control how we respond — and that's where our industry shines.*

stepped in to facilitate conversations among suppliers, reps and distributors—sharing insights, troubleshooting pain points and proposing solutions. In an industry where we compete daily, moments like these remind us how aligned we are when it really counts. This dialogue led to a shared understanding and a more consistent approach. A common understanding between suppliers and distributors has resulted in a sound business approach toward the application and accounting for tariffs.

Just as we did during COVID era, the industry came together for the greater good.

Challenges remain.

As I write this, in response to customer feedback, we at E-T-A are reevaluating the default process we put in place back in April. We're considering a more transparent approach—one that facilitates smoother invoice processing while continuing to recover real costs.

Of course, the bigger question still looms: What will the tariff landscape look like in the days and weeks ahead? If we've learned anything, it's to expect the unexpected.

They say misery loves company. I'd say we're lucky—because in this industry, the company we keep is collaborative, resilient and ready for whatever comes next. ■

MANUFACTURING UPDATE

John Guetens  
E-T-A Engineering Technology  
Sr. Vice President/Manufacturers  
john.guetens@e-t-a.com

Did someone say  
"tariffs?"





INDUSTRY UPDATE

Kingsland Coombs,  
CPMR, CSP  
Control Sales Inc.  
Sr. Vice President at Large  
kingc@controlsales.com

Office space: the sequel



In the Winter 2023 issue of *The Represen-*  
*tor*, I shared our firm's evolving perspective  
on office space. At the time, our Illinois head-  
quarters lease was nearing expiration. While  
our team had fully embraced a remote/hybrid  
workstyle, our physical office remained quite  
traditional—a relatively large footprint made  
up of private offices, many of them sitting  
unused.

We explored several commercial spaces  
in our preferred area, but ultimately decided  
to extend our lease for another two years.  
Though some options were appealing, the  
combined cost of moving, building out new  
space and paying higher rates per square foot  
didn't justify a change.

I'm pleased to report that this spring, we  
finally made our move into a new office.

Back in 2023, there was still uncertainty  
across the business community about whether  
remote work would become a lasting trend.  
In our industry, outside sales roles typically  
included some level of remote flexibility, but  
there was less clarity around the preferred  
workstyle for partners and inside sales staff.

By 2025, our view has become clearer.  
We remain committed to promoting work-  
life balance and supporting the health and  
well-being of our entire team. Since we've  
grown highly proficient at using technology  
to stay connected, we've embraced a hybrid  
workstyle across the board. That said, we  
still believe strongly in the value of in-person  
interaction—for relationship building, men-  
toring and collaboration with our manufac-  
turing and distribution partners.

Our new office environment supports  
all of these goals. We selected a multi-story  
building in a vibrant location, surrounded by  
other businesses, upscale shops and restau-  
rants. The area also offers excellent access to  
highways, airports and other key transporta-  
tion routes.

We reduced our overall square footage  
by about 30 to 40 percent, choosing a space  
that is both flexible and semi-private—ideal  
for hybrid schedules and focused work. For  
us, that means two full-time offices, two  
workstations, a large conference area and a  
well-equipped kitchenette. We also made sure  
to retain space for IT infrastructure, samples,  
literature and promotional materials. The  
space is bright, modern and welcoming.

Rather than mandate specific in-office  
days, we've created a space that encourages  
engagement. Looking ahead, we expect to  
bring on younger team members to replace  
those retiring in the coming years. For them,  
we anticipate more structured in-office time.  
In our experience, fully remote roles work  
well for seasoned professionals, while younger  
employees benefit greatly from hands-on  
mentorship and regular face-to-face interac-  
tion.

The move has been more than just a  
physical transition—it's been a rejuvena-  
tion. Clearing out years' worth of old files,  
samples, supplies and office decor was sur-  
prisingly cathartic. It's allowed us to mentally  
reset and prepare for new challenges ahead.

If you're in the Chicago area, we'd love for  
you to stop by and see the new space! ■

TALKING TAXES

Tax deductions for your home office

Many people are working from home  
these days, but are your home office expenses  
deductible for income tax purposes? If you  
are self-employed, or if you own an interest  
in your business, you may be able to deduct  
certain expenses for the part of your home  
used exclusively for business, commonly  
known as "business use of home deductions."  
Unfortunately, if you are an employee but  
not an owner of the business, you are no  
longer allowed to take this deduction as a  
miscellaneous itemized deduction, following  
passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.  
Some examples of arrangements that do  
qualify for the business use of a home that  
qualify for a tax deduction are:

1. A portion of your home is used  
exclusively on a regular basis as the principal  
place of business for your trade or business.
2. A portion of your home is used  
exclusively on a regular basis to meet or deal  
with your clients or customers in the normal  
course of your trade or business.
3. A separate structure that's not attached  
to your home, used exclusively on a regular  
basis in connection with your trade or  
business.

A portion of your home is used on a  
regular basis for storage of inventory or  
product samples used in your trade or business  
of selling products at retail or wholesale, so  
long as your home is the sole fixed location of  
such trade or business.

The term "exclusively and on a regular  
basis" means that the space must be used only  
for conducting your business and not for  
personal use. In addition, you must determine  
that your home is the principal place of your  
trade or business, after considering where  
you perform your most important business  
activities and spend the most time conducting  
your business.

A portion of your home may also qualify  
as your principal place of business if you  
use it for the administrative or management  
activities of your trade or business and have  
no other fixed location where you conduct  
substantial administrative or management  
activities for that trade or business.

For business storage, your home must be  
the sole fixed location of your business, but  
exclusive use isn't required.

Once you have determined that your home  
office qualifies for the deduction, you can  
take deductions for direct expenses as well as  
indirect expenses. Direct expenses are expenses  
that benefit the business only. Indirect  
expenses benefit the business as well as the  
home. The deductible business portion of  
your indirect expenses is the percentage of the  
square footage of your home used exclusively  
for business in relation to the square footage  
of your home as a whole. For example, if your  
home office is 300 square feet and your home  
is 2,000 square feet, the deductible portion  
of your indirect expenses is 15 percent.  
Some examples of indirect expenses are: real  
estate taxes, mortgage interest, rent, utilities,  
insurance, depreciation, security, landlines,  
internet, maintenance and repairs. In general,  
you may not deduct expenses for the parts  
of your home not used for business, such as  
landscaping.

Note that certain expenses such as  
mortgage interest and real estate taxes may  
also be taken as itemized deductions. If the  
business portion of your home is 15 percent,  
then you can deduct 15 percent of your  
mortgage interest as a business expense and  
the remaining 85 percent can be taken as an  
itemized deduction. In addition, claiming the  
business portion of the depreciation on your  
home could produce a taxable gain when you  
sell your home.

There is a safe harbor method to compute  
the business use of home deduction which  
is less burdensome and requires less record  
keeping. Revenue Procedure 2013-13 allows  
qualifying taxpayers to use a prescribed rate  
of \$5 per square foot of the portion of the  
home used for business (up to a maximum of  
300 square feet) to compute the income tax  
deduction. Under this safe harbor method,  
depreciation is treated as zero and will have no  
impact on the sale of your home. In addition,  
if you use the safe harbor method, you may  
also take 100 percent of your mortgage  
interest and real estate taxes as itemized  
deductions.

Please contact me if you have any questions  
regarding this article or income tax planning  
in general. ■



by J. Christian Manalli  
Partner, SFBGG

*J. Christian Manalli is a partner  
in the Chicago law firm of Schoenberg  
Finkel Beederman Bell Glazer LLC.  
Manalli concentrates his practice on  
federal tax, estate planning, probate  
and general business matters.*

*Manalli can be reached at 312-  
648-2300, or by email at christian.  
manalli@sfbgg.com.*

Find out more information  
about 2025 STEP:

Exclusively  
sponsored by:

the TTI FAMILY  
of SPECIALISTS

**STEP**

Sales Training for Electronics Professionals

**Registration now open!**

**Oct. 7 - 9, 2025**

**STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS ON SESSION  
TOPICS AND SPEAKERS!**



# When family agreement is breached, neither rep’s wife nor principal gets off “scott”-free



by Adam Glazer  
ERA General Counsel, SFBBG

Adam J. Glazer is an attorney with law firm SFBBG, and serves as general counsel to ERA. Glazer advises reps and rep firms on transactional strategy, succession planning, contract drafting and commission recovery. You may contact Adam Glazer at adam.glazer@sfbbg.com.

As Mary Karr, author of “The Liars’ Club,” aptly put it: “A dysfunctional family is any family with more than one person in it.” However true the observation, rarely does such dysfunctionality wind up in federal court. Yet in 2024, two married sales reps sued a sales rep sibling and sister-in-law essentially for their ingratitude, and also for breaching an agreement. For good measure, these dysfunctional family members even dragged their manufacturer into court with them.

### The dysfunctionality

Sales reps Ed and Maripat Scott, husband and wife, operate Great Scott National Sales, Inc. Ed’s brother Jim Scott, also a rep, approached Ed and Maripat in 2017 about working with them as an independent contractor, but wanted to maintain his longtime relationship with Howard Products, Inc. The family soon entered into a written sales representative agreement providing that Great Scott would support Jim’s efforts with Howard and would receive compensation in the form of 30 percent of the commissions.

The parties understood that Jim suffered from a debilitating health condition that would result in his inability to continue working. This led them to also enter into the seemingly inconsistent “Scott Family Agreement” where Ed and Maripat orally agreed to forego taking any commissions on the Howard Products business while Jim was active, in exchange for the account getting turned over to them once Jim’s medical condition sidelined him.

In addition to Jim, Ed and Maripat, at least five other family members were aware of this oral agreement. In reliance on its terms, Ed and Maripat assisted Jim with the Howard account and trained his wife, Cheryl Scott, to step in when Jim was unable to continue, all without compensation. During this time, the commission dollars went to Jim and Cheryl.

### Family betrayal and response

Jim’s advancing medical condition ended his sales rep career in the spring of 2023. Cheryl was then approached by another family member who recommended she retire and turn the account over to Great Scott, as agreed. Instead, she stated she wanted to give

the Howard contract to her son. Mother and son soon formed another rep company, the Scott Legacy Group, and convinced Howard to send the commission payments directly to Cheryl.

In response, Great Scott, Ed and Maripat filed suit against Cheryl, Jim and Howard Products in federal court in Chicago. They sought to recover their losses when the Howard business was not transferred upon Jim stepping aside. The plaintiffs brought claims against Jim and Cheryl for breach of contract and breach of fiduciary duty, and against Howard Products for violating the Illinois Sales Representative Act.

### The sales rep act claim

As most reps know, sales rep protection statutes in many states seek to level the playing field with deeper-pocketed principals by providing powerful protections to reps who do not timely receive their full commissions, including the potential to recover exemplary damages and attorneys’ fees.

To avoid facing such liability, Howard moved to dismiss, contending plaintiffs failed to allege it was in the business of selling a tangible product, as the Illinois Sales Rep Act requires. The argument gained little traction, however, when the federal judge recognized that “Plaintiffs need not specifically plead what Howard Products’ products are or how they are made, produced, or transported to successfully plead an ISRA claim.”

By pleading that Jim had a long-term relationship with Howard that he sought to continue by affiliating with Great Scott, and that Ed and Maripat helped set up vendor portals at various trade shows that included “product descriptions, packs, images, and on-line selling details,” plaintiffs had adequately set out a “reasonable inference” that Howard was in the business of producing a tangible product under the ISRA.

Howard also challenged whether the plaintiffs properly pled they were a “sales representative” within the meaning of the statute, which defines the term as “a person who contracts with a principal to solicit orders and who is compensated in whole or in part by commission.” The point attempted was that

(continued from previous page)

Jim was the “sales representative,” not plaintiffs.

As recounted by the court, the complaint alleged that: (1) together, Jim, Ed and Maripat, as agents of Great Scott, had negotiated an agreement with Howard, (2) Howard paid monthly commissions to Great Scott for the work they and Jim performed, and (3) Ed and Maripat performed extensive work on the Howard accounts, including “preparation and execution of appropriate forms, insurance, vendor portal submissions, booth set-up, and booth sales.” This showed a “principal” and “sales representative” relationship sufficient to preserve the ISRA claim.

### The breach of contract claim

Cheryl challenged the contract claim directed against her, starting by pointing out the complaint did not expressly plead she was a party to the contract between Great Scott and Jim. Yet, such could be “reasonably inferred” from its allegations, according to the court.

Plaintiffs did allege that the oral contract required Jim and Cheryl to “cooperate with Ed and Maripat to ensure that the Howard Products’ line, and all of the related accounts, would be transferred to Great Scott” upon Jim’s inability to keep working. The complaint further alleged that plaintiffs trained Cheryl in “hardware channel verbiage so she could reply to correspondence from Howard Products,” and that she was responsible for communicating on Jim’s behalf and to “look out for Jim’s interest in the Scott Family Agreement.”

As if this was not enough, the court made much of the allegations relating to another family member approaching Cheryl to suggest she consider retiring and turn the Howard account over to Ed and Maripat. Her rejection was clear: “No, I’m thinking of giving it to the kid.”

The court found “two things can be inferred from this exchange.” First, Cheryl was acting pursuant to the Scott Family Agreement evidenced by the relative recommending she “retire.” Secondly, Cheryl was aware of the oral agreement to turn over the Howard account and sought to renege on its terms by instead giving it to her son.

Considered as a whole, these allegations made it plausible that Cheryl was a party to the contract and further that she breached the contract by refusing to transfer the accounts to Great Scott.

### The breach of fiduciary duty claim

Fiduciary duties are owed only in certain relationships, not every time two or more parties enter into a contract. By alleging Cheryl was a member of the joint venture between the parties, plaintiffs suggested that the relationship existed, but Cheryl disputed this in her motion.

The complaint included allegations that Cheryl received payment for services provided to Howard through Great Scott pursuant to the Scott Family Agreement. Together with alleging that the parties shared control and management of the Howard Products account, from which they shared profits, the court determined the complaint adequately alleged Cheryl owed a fiduciary duty to the plaintiffs. And by claiming she withheld funds owed to other members of the joint venture, plaintiffs alleged the fiduciary duties owed were breached.

### The dysfunctionality will continue

Accordingly, the motions to dismiss from Howard Products and Cheryl Scott were denied in late May 2025. The Scott family fight would continue.

Perhaps the court’s ruling will actually calm the waters and enable the parties to discuss settlement. More likely, the case will progress through the discovery process where the Scotts will get to take (figuratively) swings at each other before their family fight is ultimately set for trial. While such an outcome would prove undesirable, it would confirm Jerry Seinfeld’s sage observation that, “There is no such thing as fun for the whole family.” ■



### ERA Officers

Chairman of the Board:  
John O’Brien, CPMR  
jobrien@cbanec.com

President:  
Tom Griffin, CPMR  
tgriffin@catalystunity.com

Senior Vice President/Fiscal & Legal:  
John Hutson, CPMR  
john@macinniscompany.com

Senior Vice President/Education:  
Ellen Coan, CPMR  
ellen.coan@ccelectro.net

Senior Vice President/Membership:  
Lori Bruno, CPMR  
lori@luscombridge.com

Senior Vice President/Industry:  
Cameron English, CPMR  
cenglish@englishsales.com

Senior Vice President at Large:  
Kingsland Coombs, CPMR, CSP  
kingc@controlsales.com

Senior Vice President at Large:  
Ken Bellerio  
kenbellero@gmail.com

Senior Vice President/Manufacturers:  
John Guetens  
john.guetens@e-t-a.com

Senior Vice President/Distributors:  
Lou Copley  
louis.copley@avnet.com

Chief Executive Officer (Ex-Officio):  
Walter E. Tobin  
wtobin@era.org

### ERA Staff

Chief Executive Officer:  
Walter E. Tobin  
wtobin@era.org

Finance Director:  
Susan Bannwart  
susan@era.org

Operations Director:  
Karin Derkacz  
kderkacz@era.org

Membership Coordinator:  
Ama Derringer  
aderringer@era.org

Communications Director:  
Clare Kluck  
ckluck@era.org

Events Manager:  
Kate Van Hise  
kvanhise@era.org

Operations Specialist:  
Natalie Zullo  
nzullo@era.org

Graphic Designer  
Jeff Weber

ERA Office:  
1325 S. Arlington Heights Rd., Suite 204  
Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007  
T: 312.419.1432  
info@era.org • era.org





Advancing member success and professionalism through education, networking, and dedicated service to our customers and community

### Stay connected and get involved!

Join our mailing list to collaborate with Florida's top manufacturers, distributors, and reps on events and initiatives.  
Email us at [shane@cbcelectronics.net](mailto:shane@cbcelectronics.net) to be added!

### Florida Sunshine ERA Member Organizations

**ANRO Associates**  
[jeff.boos@anroassociates.com](mailto:jeff.boos@anroassociates.com)

**EOX Sales LLC**  
[cherylc@eoxsales.com](mailto:cherylc@eoxsales.com)

**Precision Marketing Services**  
[david.penna@precision-marketing.com](mailto:david.penna@precision-marketing.com)

**Blair Engineering Southeast Inc.**  
[steve.fabian@blairse.com](mailto:steve.fabian@blairse.com)

**FLA Technology Sales, Inc.**  
[terry@flatechnology.com](mailto:terry@flatechnology.com)

**QREP Inc.**  
[cbevan@qrepinc.com](mailto:cbevan@qrepinc.com)

**Brandel-Stephens & Co.**  
[ttoomey@brandel-stephens.com](mailto:ttoomey@brandel-stephens.com)

**Graham Performance Tech, LLC**  
[art@gptrep.com](mailto:art@gptrep.com)

**South Atlantic Component Sales**  
[kbonucchi@sacs-rep.com](mailto:kbonucchi@sacs-rep.com)

**CBC Electronics, Inc.**  
[bill@cbcelectronics.net](mailto:bill@cbcelectronics.net)

**HHP Associates**  
[sabramson@hhpai.com](mailto:sabramson@hhpai.com)

**Southeastern Sales RF**  
[goliver@sesrf.com](mailto:goliver@sesrf.com)

**Conley & Associates, Inc.**  
[ldietrich@conleyrep.com](mailto:ldietrich@conleyrep.com)

**MEC**  
[barbara@mec-corp.com](mailto:barbara@mec-corp.com)

**Sunland Associates**  
[rickcallinan@sunlandrep.com](mailto:rickcallinan@sunlandrep.com)

**Current Solutions**  
[aljr@currentsolutions.com](mailto:aljr@currentsolutions.com)

**Mega Technologies, Inc.**  
[spirosn@megatechnologiesinc.com](mailto:spirosn@megatechnologiesinc.com)

**Tenn Tech**  
[bill.manda@tenntechllc.com](mailto:bill.manda@tenntechllc.com)

**e-components**  
[steve.oneill@e-components.com](mailto:steve.oneill@e-components.com)

**Performance Technical Sales, Inc.**  
[brad@pts-rep.com](mailto:brad@pts-rep.com)

### Sunshine ERA Charity Golf Tournament



**Duran Golf Club | Viera, FL**



**December 4th | Welcome Happy Hour**  
**December 5th | Golf Tournament**

### Officers

#### President

Greg Warren | Brandel-Stephens

#### VP Fiscal & Legal

Lisa Dietrich | Conley & Associates

#### VP Education & Membership

Seth Brock | CBC Electronics

#### Secretary

Shane Recicar | CBC Electronics

#### Board Member, Distribution

Kim Brookshire | Hughes Peters

#### Board Member, South Florida

Tom Cullinan | Brandel-Stephens

#### Board Member

Karen Boardman

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# ERA takes a manufacturer from newcomer to nationwide

by Václav Rychtařík, Director of Marketing, ELKO EP North America

When ELKO EP North America first entered the U.S. market, we knew we had the right products. What we didn't have – yet – was the right network.

As a European manufacturer expanding into a vast and highly relationship-driven industry, we needed a way to build trust quickly, connect with serious partners and learn fast.

Two years later, our rep and distributor network covers nearly all of the U.S. and Canada. And while there's a lot that went into that growth, one factor stands out clearly: Joining ERA made all the difference.

### A directory that actually works

We became aware of ERA through a recommendation from our very first rep in the U.S. He pointed us to Walter Tobin, and shortly after that conversation, ELKO EP NA joined ERA.

From the start, the biggest practical value came from the ERA HoverMap®. Unlike many membership directories that are more symbolic than actionable, this one gave us a full view of active, qualified rep firms – complete with territories, emails and phone numbers.

Jan Pačovský, ELKO EP NA's CEO, personally reached out to nearly every ERA member rep firm listed. Most of the rep firms we now work with came directly from that outreach. In other words: ERA's HoverMap® helped us build our entire rep network.

### EDS: Where the industry comes to work

Our first EDS Summit in 2024 was a game changer. We didn't just meet new people – we signed new distributors and reps. And when we returned in 2025, we closed more partnerships and opened up new distributor discussions across North America.

What stood out to us is how different EDS is from other events. This isn't a "stop by and chat" kind of conference. It's tightly scheduled, fast-moving and results-oriented – the kind of format that rewards preparation and decisiveness.

ERA's meeting rooms at EDS made it possible for us to hold serious business discussions behind closed doors without needing to rent a costly suite as a smaller player. Between that, the food, the logistics and the overall support, it's clear that ERA goes out of its way to make it easy for members to show up and succeed.

### People who actually help

What surprised us most? That ERA isn't just a badge – it's a real, responsive team of people who care about your success.

Walter Tobin's name carries weight across the industry. He was always willing to help us make the right connections, respond to our emails promptly and offer guidance – even when the questions weren't strictly about our membership. He'll be missed as he heads into retirement.

His team deserves equal credit. Kate Van Hise helped us get involved as a sponsor of the ERA Conference, handling everything with professionalism and speed. Clare Kluck made it possible for us to tell our story here in *The Representor*, and has been nothing short of fantastic.

### More than membership – a mark of credibility

For a new company on the North American scene, ERA was more than a resource – it was a seal of approval. We proudly feature the ERA logo in

our marketing materials, LinkedIn presence and sales decks. It signals to partners that we're serious, connected and part of something bigger.

Looking back, we didn't expect ERA to deliver this much value. We've all seen organizations that are long on talk and short on action. This wasn't that.

For us, ERA has been the single most effective accelerator of our entry into the U.S. and Canadian markets. If you're a manufacturer wondering if ERA is worth it – we're here to say it absolutely is.

Because thanks to ERA, we didn't just come prepared. We left aligned. And we've been growing ever since. ■



Jan Pačovský, ELKO EP North America CEO, and Walter Tobin, ERA CEO, at the 2025 EDS Summit.





Chapter News reports the local activities of the 22 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.

ARIZONA

In mid-May, Arizona ERA held its annual golf tournament at The Legacy Golf Club, bringing together a large group of representatives, distributors, manufacturers and OEM & EMS customers — all for a day of friendly competition, great conversations and community building.

A special thank you to the organizers and Arizona ERA Board members Alicia Doten, Kevin Davis, Rick Dale, Wyatt Gifford, Michael Del Vecchio, Drew Vojslavek and Cameron English for putting together such a well-run and enjoyable event. Your hard work behind the scenes made this tournament a standout success once again.

CAROLINAS

Carolinas ERA will host its 22nd annual golf event on Thurs., Oct. 9 at The Challenge Golf Course in Graham, N.C. Visit event.racereach.com/ceragolf to register, volunteer and/or sponsor. This is open to all reps, manufacturers, distributors, friends, co-workers and family!

CHESAPEAKE

In June, Chesapeake ERA hosted what may have been the region's first ERA-sponsored networking event in two decades (not exaggerating)! And a fun evening it was. More than 30 people turned out to meet up, enjoy some food, a few adult beverages and take turns smacking the little white balls around — and getting acquainted and reacquainted with industry colleagues. Reps, distributors and a few manufacturers attended the outing and all asked "When's the next one?" Special thanks to Avnet, Heilind, Sager and ERA National for making donations to help sponsor the event.



CHICAGOLAND-WISCONSIN

In June, Chicagoland-Wisconsin ERA held its annual Summerfest gathering at the huge lakefront musical festival in Milwaukee.

This is always a fun, relaxed networking event for chapter members and colleagues!

The chapter is planning to host its first golf event on August 21. Stay tuned for more details!

FLORIDA

Mark your calendars — Dec. 4 will be the Florida-Sunshine ERA's annual Toys for Tots Drive, Holiday party and golf outing at Duran Golf Club in Viera, Fla. Save the date and contact Greg Warren at gwarren@brandel-stephens.com with any questions or for more details.

INDIANA-KENTUCKY

Indiana-Kentucky ERA had a great day of fun at the Indy 500 in May, watching the race from a comfortable suite and networking with fellow reps and distributor partners!



Join Indiana-Kentucky ERA on Thurs., August 14 for its summer golf event, a fun-filled day on the greens that will benefit the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research.

The event is open to ERA members and non-members alike, including customers and co-workers.

Various participation and sponsorship options are available.

OHIO

In late June, Ohio ERA took a mid-week "break for baseball" and gathered at the Lake Erie Captains minor league baseball game. Chapter members enjoyed a day outside, networked and discussed upcoming chapter events.

On Sept. 4, the chapter will host its first golf event at Punderson Manor Lodge & Conference Center in Newbury, OH. Stay tuned for emails and announcements about registration and sponsorships.

MEXICO

ERA Mexico invites its regional members and colleagues to attend the Binational Electronics Show 2025, a tradeshow that will aim to bring together leaders and companies from the global electronic components sector,

(continued from previous page)

offering a platform for the exchange of ideas and business opportunities, as well as for fostering collaborations in a near shoring environment. This event highlights the importance of the border region between both countries as a vital hub for the global electronics industry. Visit binationalelectronics.com for more details.

At the show, ERA Mexico will hold a presentation and chapter meeting Thurs., August 14 at 8 a.m. in Room A5 / Sala A5. Keynote speaker Jesús Cañas and Isabel Brizuela, economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, will present "U.S.-Mexico Trade Under Increasing Uncertainty" and host a Q&A at the chapter meeting.

NEW ENGLAND

Kudos to New England ERA for a very successful young professionals social mixer in late May at the Mighty Squirrel in downtown Boston. The chapter had an exceptionally strong showing, and so many young talented people were out and about, enjoying time with peers and networking across the channel.

Thank you to the New England ERA Committee, especially Julie Carr, Kelly York and Michael Walsh for smooth event management and to Riley O'Brien for your emceeing support!

New England ERA will host its 5th annual golf event on Oct. 2 at Four Oaks Country Club in Dracut, Mass.



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sixty golfers hit the links for a great cause at Northern California ERA's second annual Golf Tournament, which raised funds for Special Olympics Northern California. The event kicked off with an 8:00 a.m. shotgun start and concluded with lunch at the club. Walter Tobin, ERA's CEO, joined the fun!



PACIFIC NORTHWEST

In May, Pacific Northwest ERA hosted a lively gathering in collaboration with the NEDME Show Group. The event served as an opportunity to honor the distinguished speakers slated for the upcoming NEDME Show on October 22, 2025, in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Attendees enjoyed an evening of engaging conversation, networking and camaraderie, accompanied by excellent food, beer and wine. A key discussion point of the evening centered on ERA/PNW's review of subsidy opportunities for rep groups choosing to exhibit at the annual expo. This initiative underscores ERA/PNW's commitment to supporting industry professionals and enhancing participation in major regional events.

With the NEDME Show on the horizon, this gathering set the stage for an exciting and impactful industry event, further strengthening ERA/PNW's presence and collaboration within the Pacific Northwest region.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

2025 has been one for the books! Southern California ERA kicked things off with a high-energy Rock N' Social in Orange County, followed by strong showings at the Del Mar Show and the San Diego Summer Kickoff at Pure Project in Vista. These events have kept the local electronics sales community connected, collaborative and growing.

And there's more ahead.

The chapter will tee off at its Annual ERA Charity Golf Tournament on September 8 at Alta Vista Country Club—supporting Operation Homefront and military families through a day of camaraderie and friendly competition.

Then, it'll celebrate two decades of ERA tradition at the 20th Annual Sagebrush Social on October 8. If you know, you know—this one's not to be missed.

Chapter members will also be at the Anaheim Electronics & Manufacturing Show on September 24–25, connecting with the region's top reps, manufacturers and solution providers. Make sure to stop by and say hello!

Finally, don't miss the Economic Outlook Dinner on Nov. 6, where we'll dive into the economic trends and industry shifts that matter most heading into 2026. ■





ERA ANNOUNCES  
RETIREMENT OF  
WALTER TOBIN, CEO

ERA announces that CEO Walter Tobin will retire from the association after 10 years. The ERA Executive Committee has formed an executive search team and is currently working diligently to find a new CEO for the organization.

“After a 10-year career as ERA CEO, with success that cannot be overstated, Walter Tobin has notified us of his intention to retire,” said Tom Griffin, CPMR, President of the ERA Executive Committee. “Whether we measure Walter’s success in membership, revenue growth, ERA Conference attendance, sponsorships, perception in our industry or anything else, Walter has performed beyond our wildest expectations. We are very grateful for his passion and leadership.”

“I have had the distinct pleasure and honor of serving on the ERA Executive Committee for Walter’s entire 10 years as CEO,” said John O’Brien, CPMR, Chairman of the ERA Executive Committee. “His commitment to our Association and its membership has been unparalleled. I am fortunate to not only have had the opportunity to work with Walter, but can call him my friend.”

Throughout Tobin’s tenure as CEO of ERA, he has brought new life into the association, growing its membership and annual Conference attendance by three-fold. He has carried forth fully the association’s mission of advancing the rep function while joining together the “three legs of the stool” – manufacturers’ reps, distributors and manufacturers. He oversaw the implementation of the ERA HoverMap®, SearchLink.ai, the significant growth of ERA’s distributor membership category, the revival of many regional ERA chapters, an ERA podcast, ERA LIVE and the ERA/Edgewater partnership industry survey, among many other initiatives.

ERA’s annual Tobin Bridge award, created and presented for the first time in 2020, was named after Walter and refers to a famous bridge in Boston. It recognizes individuals who successfully “bridge” and unite people across the electronics components industry.

REGISTRATION NOW  
OPEN FOR STEP 2025

Registration for ERA's STEP (Sales Training for Electronics Professionals) 2025 is now open! Now in its fifth year, ERA's live, virtual training program will take place Oct. 7-9, 2025, and will offer both veteran and newcomer electronics sales professionals a chance to take a "step" up in their careers and sharpen their sales skills. Sponsored by the TTI Family of Specialists, the program offers nine sessions that will span an array of useful topics, including sales communication, AI, relationship-building and more. Register at [era.org/step-2025](http://era.org/step-2025), and stay tuned throughout the summer for more information on sessions, schedule and speakers.

ERA ANNOUNCES 2026  
CORE COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS

ERA has announced the chair, vice chair and members of the 2026 ERA Conference Committee. Perry Thornton, president, Pinnacle Marketing, will serve as Conference Committee Chair, and Julie Carr, vice president, MacInnis Group, will serve as Conference Committee Vice Chair.

The remainder of the 2026 Conference Committee leaders are as follows: Adam Anderson, CPMR, Breakout Sessions Co-Chair; Holly Good, Breakout Sessions Co-Chair; Zach Anderson, Keynote/General Sessions Co-Chair; Heather D’Amico, CPMR, Keynote/General Sessions Co-Chair; Adam Grigor, Sponsorships Co-Chair; Scott Lindberg, Sponsorships Co-Chair; Todd McAtee, Conference Advisor; and Ellen Coan, CPMR, ERA Executive Committee Liaison.

For a list of the entire Conference Committee, view page 17 of this issue.

The 2026 ERA Conference will be ERA’s 57th national conference and will take place at a brand-new venue — the Hilton Austin Downtown — on February 22-24, 2026.

IN MEMORIAM: DAVID  
H. MYERS

ERA announces with sadness the passing of David H. Myers in April 2025 in Maryland. Myers had a long and successful career as the owner of rep firm Naudain Associates Southern. He served as delegate and then president for a time of the Chesapeake ERA chapter. Myers was inducted into the ERA White Pin Group in 1985.

For more information, view Myer's obituary: <https://www.haightfuneralhome.com/obituaries/david-myers-44/#!/Obituary> ■

RIISING STARS: Zach Thonen

*(continued from page 8)*

looking to bring in some younger talent. Young professionals want to bring fresh ideas, be creative and bring themselves to a role.

I think first, younger professionals need to be made more aware of our existence! If it wasn’t for my Cure band, I would never have known this industry exists. I think the biggest constraints to youth entering our industry are awareness and slow growth, and I recommend finding ways to leverage younger professionals’ tech proficiencies to evolve rep firms.

**Where do you see your profession and the industry 10 to 20 years from now?**

I think as AI continues to supplant more of our daily busy work, interpersonal aspects like relationships and strong customer service will become even more important in differentiating yourself as someone others want to work with.

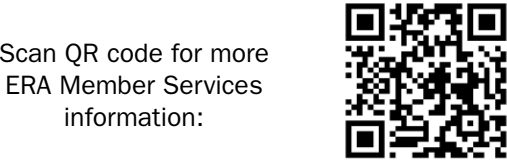
**Professionally, what keeps you up at night?**

There are four things keeping me up currently: 1) Tariffs, and the uncertainty surrounding them, 2) AI’s rapid developments and the need to keep up with them, 3) Chinese tech innovations in things like EVs and AI competing with Western alternatives, and finally, 4) Optimism — or rather a lack thereof — by customers, buyers and decision makers. ■

MEMBER SERVICES

*For a complete list of ERA’s **Recognized Resources**, visit the Member Services page on [ERA.org](http://ERA.org) or scan the QR code below. **Avis and Hertz Car Rentals** member discounts are **ONLY** accessible via the ERA website).*

- **BUDDE MARKETING SYSTEMS** is a leading provider of point-of-sale (POS) reporting. Call 708-301-2111 or email [sales@buddemarketing.com](mailto:sales@buddemarketing.com).
- **EDGEWATER RESEARCH** offers research published on technology, digital advertising, e-commerce and consumer. Visit [edgewaterresearch.com](http://edgewaterresearch.com).
- **G&G CREATIVE SERVICES** creates impactful brands, websites, email & marketing campaigns, managed hosting, website policies, ADA compliance & ongoing technical support. Visit [ggcreative.nyc/era](http://ggcreative.nyc/era).
- **JJM SEARCH** is the global executive search firm founded by Carla Mahrt, a 20-year electronics industry veteran. Visit [jjmsearch.com](http://jjmsearch.com).
- **LECTRIX** is a results-driven marketing company that serves electronics manufacturers, suppliers and representatives. Visit [lectrixgroup.com](http://lectrixgroup.com).
- **REPFABRIC / EMPOWERING SYSTEMS'** efficiency tools for manufacturers and representatives. Sync data with partners, see trends with analytics and manage your sales pipeline in one system. Contact Carroll at [carroll.boysen@repfabric.com](mailto:carroll.boysen@repfabric.com), or 888-297-2750 x709. Visit [repfabric.com](http://repfabric.com).
- **SCHOENBERG FINKEL BEEDERMAN BELL & GLAZER LLC** offers legal Expert Access services to all ERA members. Visit [sfbbg.com](http://sfbbg.com) or call Adam Glazer at 312-648-2300.
- **UPS** is an ERA member service provider for shipping of all kinds. For discounts of up to 34 percent, call 800-MEMBERS (636-2377). ■







Manufacturers' Representative

**"THE RESPONSIVE COMPANY"**

Advancing Technology, Quality  
and Supply Chain Since 1981

IN/KY/OH/MI

715 N. Senate Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

317-612-5000  
carol.cohen@ccelectro.net  
www.ccelectro.net



New and updated  
Manufacturers' Rep Toolkit —  
a members-only benefit on ERA.org!





TECHNICAL MANUFACTURERS REPRESENTATIVES

- Are you a manufacturer looking for sales representative?
- Are you looking to merge or sell your rep firm?
- Are you a technical salesperson looking for a new challenge?

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions.

We currently have openings for outside Sales Engineers in our markets.

Please contact: [Dan Connors at 317-919-0000](mailto:dconnors@dytec-txsales.com) to discuss further or

Email: [dconnors@dytec-txsales.com](mailto:dconnors@dytec-txsales.com)

Dytec-TX Sales has decades of experience providing professional technical electronics sales representation in the

Midwest (IL, IN, WI, OH, MI, IA, WPA, MN, MO, KY) region.

**Update:** Dytec-NCI successfully acquired Ft Wayne, IN. Based TX Sales. We merged both companies in 2023 forming Dytec-TX Sales. We are interested in continuing our growth via organic, merger or acquisition.

**\*Over 45 Years of Integrity, Determination and Results**

[WWW.DYTEC-TXSALES.COM](http://WWW.DYTEC-TXSALES.COM)

317-578-0474

# TAEJIN completes reliable power supply systems

with its high-quality power IC Products

**Applications:**

Automotive · Communications Equipment  
Personal Electronics · Industrial · Medical



## Power Supply Systems with High Quality Power ICs

A specialist in power management ICs, TAEJIN Technology has been dedicated to developing linear and switching power ICs, along with peripherals for power systems in various electronic applications, ensuring highly reliable and cost-effective power system operation over the years.

## Automotive Regulators

AEC-Q100 qualified regulator ICs are available, offering superior electrical characteristics, excellent reliability, suitable packaging options, and competitive pricing.

## Regulators for E-Meters


High-quality regulator ICs compatible with industrial and automotivegrade standards are available for E-Meter applications. These regulators offer superior electrical characteristics, excellent reliability, suitable packaging options, and competitive pricing.

## Dual Channel CMOS ULDO

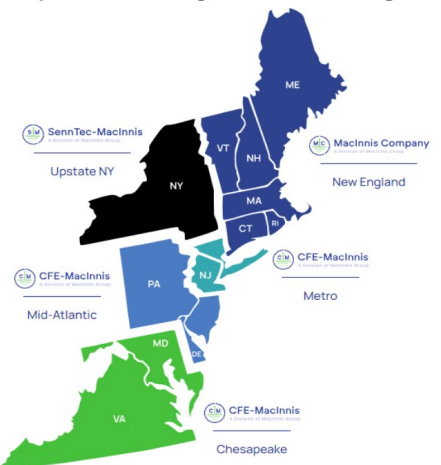
A high-performance single-chip dual-channel ultra-low dropout regulator is available, operating from 2.5 to 5.5V input voltage. It features ultra-low dropout voltage and low ground current, with an option for AEC-Q100 qualification.





**MacInnis Group**  
Manufacturers' Representatives


We are an established independent manufacturers' representative organization covering:



**MacInnis Group** | [www.macinnis-group.com](http://www.macinnis-group.com)  
**New England** | [www.macinnis-company.com](http://www.macinnis-company.com)  
**Metro NY, Mid-Atlantic, Chesapeake** | [www.cfe-macinnis.com](http://www.cfe-macinnis.com)  
**Upstate NY** | [www.senntec-macinnis.com](http://www.senntec-macinnis.com)

**L&W POWER CORP**  
MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVE

*Power Products for an Electrified Future*



ILLINOIS - MICHIGAN - WISCONSIN

**Experienced Outside Sales Engineering Team  
Strong Inside Sales Support**

For Representation Contact:  
Jack Devine, President: 630.448.5762  
[jdevine@lwpower.com](mailto:jdevine@lwpower.com)  
[www.lwpower.com](http://www.lwpower.com)


**Power Electronic Solutions Since 1982**




**SAGER**  
POWER SYSTEMS  
A SPECIALIZED GROUP WITHIN SAGER ELECTRONICS

WITHOUT THE RIGHT **THERMAL SOLUTION**  
YOUR PROJECT COULD BE TOAST.



**Chapter  
Officer  
Leadership  
Training**



Scan the QR code  
to learn more!

←

COLT is a comprehensive educational program designed to help meet the challenges of serving as an ERA chapter leader. During this virtual training, attendees gain creative ideas and practical knowledge, such as member recruitment, hosting events, using the tools available on the ERA website and organizing educational sessions, all to help chapter leaders elevate chapter activities and networking opportunities.

**SAGER**  
ELECTRONICS

**THERMAL SOLUTIONS**

Sager Electronics offers standard and custom thermal products to meet any cooling requirement. From fans, blowers and impellers to heat sinks, thermal performance materials and more – no matter your needs, think Sager when you think thermal.



[sager.com](http://sager.com) | **THINK THERMAL**







Electronics Representatives Association  
1325 S. Arlington Heights Road, Suite 204  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007



WEB

# 60V Non-Synchronous DC-DC Converter

Wide Input Voltage  
Range up to 60V

Up to 3A  
Output Current

3.3V, 5.0V, 12V, 15V, and  
Adjustable Outputs

52kHz, 150kHz  
Switching Frequency

**Email** [htc@htckorea.co.kr](mailto:htc@htckorea.co.kr)

**Homepage** <https://htckorea.co.kr>

