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WHY MANUFACTURERS'
REPRESENTATIVES STILL WIN:
ACCESS, INFLUENCE AND THE
MYTH OF CONTROL

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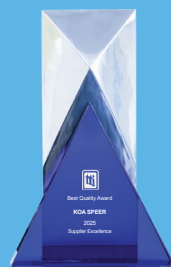


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Advancing and supporting the professional field sales function in the global electronics marketplace through programs and activities that educate, inform and advocate for manufacturers' representatives, distributors and their principals.

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WINNING

WHY MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES STILL WIN: ACCESS, INFLUENCE AND THE MYTH OF CONTROL

COVER STORY

Why manufacturers' representatives still win: access, influence and the myth of control

I recently came across a LinkedIn post discussing the merits of direct versus manufacturers' representative sales models. While I don't recall the author or the specific product, his central argument was clear: the primary advantage of a direct sales force is control.

At first glance, that sounds reasonable. But after more than 35 years as a rep firm owner, I would argue the opposite: in many cases, manufacturers actually experience greater effective control with the right representative partner than they do with direct employees.

This is especially true where a manufacturer represents a significant share of a rep firm's revenue. In those cases, the manufacturer is not just another line on the card; they are a priority.

Over the years, I—and many of my peers—have:

- Interrupted vacations and holidays to support a principal
- Joined late-night calls to accommodate global time zones
- Inspected product in customer warehouses on short notice
- Reassigned team members immediately when unexpected issues arose

When a rep becomes ill or has a family emergency, another member of the firm steps in seamlessly. There are no HR constraints, no FMLA complications and no disruption to customer engagement.

To be clear, many direct employees show tremendous dedication. But the idea that "control" is a defining advantage of the direct model simply doesn't hold up under real-world conditions.

The real differentiator: access and influence

The true distinction between direct sales and the rep model is not control—it is access and influence. This is a concept I first heard from Dave Norris of Norris and Associates, and it captures the essence of what great rep firms bring to the table.

Manufacturers' representatives are, overwhelmingly, career sales professionals. They build relationships that span decades—often

beginning when a customer's decision-maker was still a junior engineer or lab technician. Over time, these relationships evolve into trusted partnerships.

That longevity creates something incredibly valuable:

- Deep knowledge of customer organizations, culture and direction
- Insight into production volumes and future programs
- Relationships across multiple departments and decision levels

In practical terms, access and influence means: multiple product lines sold across multiple departments within the same customer; long-standing relationships with decision-makers at every level; and a track record of helping solve design and production challenges over time.

This is not transactional selling. It is consultative influence that cannot be replicated quickly, or cheaply, by a direct sales force.

Continuity vs. churn

A senior executive at a major semiconductor manufacturer once made an insightful observation: He could hire 100 direct salespeople in North America—but many of them would eventually want to become managers, then directors and then vice presidents. The result? Constant turnover and lack of continuity at the account.

A rep organization, by contrast, provides continuity. The same individuals—and the same relationships—remain in place for years, even decades.

That same company later transitioned to a direct sales model in North America. Over time, it went from being a well-known, highly visible brand to one that was largely invisible in key markets.

The hidden cost of going direct

ERA CEO Ed Smith recently noted another common outcome: When companies move to a direct model, they often lose the long tail of mid-sized, profitable customers.

What remains is typically: a smaller customer base; a concentration of large accounts; and increasing pressure from high-resource, low-margin business. In other



by Tom Griffin, CPMR
Catalyst Unity Solutions
ERA Board President
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words, companies trade breadth and stability for concentration and margin compression.

When direct does make sense

There are situations where a direct model can be effective. If a manufacturer has a large, well-supported account; deep, long-term relationships already in place; or no need to add headcount, then managing that account directly may make financial sense.

However, if adding personnel is required—and especially if a capable rep firm already covers the territory—the economics often favor the rep model. In those cases, investing in a reduced commission structure with a high-performing rep firm is typically the better decision.

The bottom line

Manufacturers will rarely achieve greater real-world control with direct employees than they can with a well-aligned representative partner. But more importantly, control is not the deciding factor. The true advantage of the rep model is—and always has been—access and influence: access to decision-makers across an organization and influence built through years of trust and proven results.

That combination drives opportunity, accelerates design-wins and sustains long-term growth.

I recognize there are many perspectives on this topic, and I welcome the conversation. If you have a different experience or insight, I encourage you to share it. Our industry benefits from an open and ongoing dialogue. ■

“ Access and influence means: multiple product lines sold across multiple departments within the same customer; long-standing relationships with decision-makers at every level; and a track record of helping solve design and production challenges over time. ”



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2026 ERA Conference



The 2026 ERA Conference took place Feb. 22-24 in Austin, Texas, with another sold-out crowd! This year's theme was "Connected by Design: Where Relationships Meet Innovation." Manufacturers, distributors, reps and consultants gathered at a new venue, the Hilton Austin in downtown Austin, dedicating two full days to learning, collaborating and networking.

The Conference agenda included a welcome reception, opening keynote speaker, four general session speakers, networking party, 15 breakout sessions and a private on-site networking bar!

Save the date for the 2027 ERA Conference, which will be held Feb. 21-23, at the Hilton Austin.



93% of this year's Conference attendees would recommend the event to a colleague!



Center top: Keynote speaker Annelise McCarthy presents "When Innovation Speaks: The Power of Human Connection in a Digital World."



Center middle and right: Walter Tobin, former ERA CEO, accepts the Lifetime Achievement Award with his family and gives a heartfelt speech.

We welcomed nearly 200 first-timers to this year's Conference!

Top: Electronics industry reps, manufacturers and distributors listen to a general session in the Austin Grand Ballroom at the Hilton Austin.

Top center left: Dave Norris is inducted into the ERA Hall of Fame.

Top center middle: John Hutson, CPMR, accepts the Ray Hall Spirit of ERA Award.

Top center middle: Lori Bruno, CPMR, accepts the Tess Hill Award.

Top middle right: Scott Lindberg accepts the Tobin Bridge Award.

Middle right: Conference attendees "say cheese" during a breakout session.

Bottom center: Attendees enjoy the Monday Night Networking party at the Conference venue, the Hilton Austin.

Bottom right: Breakout session presenter Ed Wallace presents "Relational Leadership: Connecting with the People Who Power Your Business."

Direct left: Jeff May accepts the ERA White Pin Jess Spoons Award and Scholarship.

95% of 2026 ERA Conference attendees plan to attend next year's Conference!



These companies joined ERA since the Winter 2026 issue of **The Representor.**

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ERA White Papers & Industry Standards

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- "Why Choose a Manufacturer's Rep?" Video
- 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
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- Split Influence (Commission) Recommendations for the Electronics Industry
- Split Commission Request Form, in Excel format

ERA Meetings & Programs

EDS Summit.....May 18-22, 2026
STEP 2026.....Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2026
electronica.....Nov. 10-13, 2026
COLT 2026.....Dec. 1-3, 2026

EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY

From Austin to EDS: Strengthening the three legs of the stool

Hello! Just a short time has passed since the national ERA Conference in Austin, where we hosted the event at a new venue, but still had the same great energy. Thank you to the ERA staff and volunteers for your time and effort. The sponsorships were sold out and the speakers were on point. The hotel has guaranteed that the elevators and hot water issues are being addressed. I look forward to seeing everyone in Austin next year at another great event.

Our attention now turns to the next big event in our industry which is EDS — it is Vegas or bust! I think this year EDS is very important as the industry is seeing very robust book-to-bill rates of 1.2 to 1.5 being reported, and this is being driven by markets such as industrial, medical, defense/aerospace, data centers and power. This year the conversation is about the art of the possible. How do we not build up dead inventory, while delivering the parts customers need? How do we maintain a strong backlog that they can build with all the parts available? Precise communication is necessary in these times as many things are moving quickly, like demand, inventory and what parts are not available to fulfill a complete BOM. All "legs of the stool" have to have tight communication and focus on lead time, pricing and quantities. The other big concern in a tight market is counterfeiting of parts and how customers fill the gaps in the supply chain.

This year we at ERA will roll out two new exciting programs. The first one will be a new set of TAM data broken down by area, product type and quantity. We are building a website so that reps can get the geographic data and manufacturers can get the same data as reps, plus the overall country such as the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The distributors will be able to see all the data across all regions. There are 28 columns of data so ERA is building a user-friendly website to make it into easily digestible information that will be of great value to all three legs of the stool. The second program is a formal ERA mentoring program that will help build connection and learning even further in our industry. I look forward to moving both of these programs forward and helping ERA show value to our member firms.

We at ERA look forward to seeing you all at EDS and working with you in Vegas.

Please stop by our booth in the Lily Ballroom and don't forget that we have meeting rooms available for our members to use. It is also a great place to network with fellow members and have a cup of coffee and a snack. I can't wait to see you all in Vegas and hear how the industry is moving during this new supercycle. ■



By Ed Smith
ERA CEO



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For over 7 decades, SFBBG has protected independent sales reps nationwide. ERA members can contact the "Go-To Law Firm" for sales reps for a complimentary, no-obligation 20-minute consultation—just mention ERA.



Adam J. Glazer, Esq.
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Codi Sinkovitz
 Director of Operations
 South Atlantic Component Sales

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 Codi Sinkovitz, Director of Operations at South Atlantic Components Sales (SACS).

After a career in banking, Sinkovitz shared how this industry found her, by offering challenge and growth as well as flexibility and support.

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

I have been married to my husband for 15 years, and we have three active boys who keep life very busy and fun! We love calling South Carolina home and being part of such a great community. Most of our free time is spent at the ice rink or on the baseball, soccer or lacrosse fields cheering on our kids. I stay involved through our school's PTO and our local church, and I enjoy finding opportunities to give back. Before joining the electronics industry, I spent 10 years in banking specializing in trade settlement. After having our third son, I was looking for a new challenge that allowed me to use my strengths while also giving me the flexibility to work from home.

How long have you worked in the electronics industry?

I have been in the electronics industry for almost six years. Starting in 2020 was an interesting time to begin a new role, and it really reinforced the importance of being adaptable and building strong relationships.

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

I did not necessarily choose this industry — in many ways, the industry chose me. When I was considering going back to work after having our third child, I did not have a specific path in mind. Soon after, an opportunity to join SACS presented itself. After my initial conversations with SACS, it quickly became clear that this role and this industry offered the type of challenge and growth I was looking for, and it has proven to be a very great fit.

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

Since I came from a different industry, one of the biggest challenges was learning the technology, terminology and how everything worked. It was a big learning curve, but it gave me the opportunity to be challenged and continue growing.

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

I focused on learning as much as possible, asking questions and building relationships with my experienced colleagues at SACS. Trainings, events and networking opportunities helped me gain confidence and feel more comfortable over time.

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

Participating in ERA events and trainings like COLT and the ERA Conference has been a great way to learn from industry leaders and build meaningful connections. I have also learned a lot from experienced coworkers across sales, operations and HR, which has helped me better understand how the business works as a whole. Understanding how everything connects at SACS has helped me see the bigger picture and build a strong foundation moving forward.

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

I don't think enough people realize how many opportunities exist in the electronics industry. Greater exposure through internships, mentorships and college partnerships could help attract new talent, especially by highlighting the industry's role in emerging technologies and the impact it has across so many markets.

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

I believe the electronics industry will continue to be a major driver of innovation over the next 10 to 20 years as new technologies continue to shape the market. As things evolve, our success will rely on collaboration, problem solving and helping customers navigate change.

Professionally, what keeps you up at night?

Luckily, I generally sleep well! In all seriousness, in a fast-changing industry, I am always thinking about how to stay ahead of new technology and market shifts so I can continue providing value to our customers, partners and SACS. With advancements happening so quickly, continuous learning is very important. I also focus on cross-training and collaboration to help ensure SACS stays aligned and ready to support our customers now and in the future. ■

ERA

SPRING INTO GROWTH!

ANNOUNCING A NEW
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 FOR MEMBERS!

Keep an eye on your inbox! More details and official registration links are coming your way shortly.

Whether you're looking to give back as a **mentor** or sharpen your skills as a **mentee**, this program is designed to foster connection and learning.

- Exclusive to ERA members only.
- A structured pairing system to facilitate knowledge exchange.
- Because we're stronger when we learn from each other.

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW



Casey Cavender
Chief Financial Officer
Kensington Electronics

With so many ERA members, it is not easy to get to know every rep, manufacturer and distributor in the business. The "Someone You Should Know" Q&A gives readers the chance to learn about fellow ERA members, including how their time is spent both in and out of the office.

Meet Casey Cavender, CFO at Austin-based Kensington Electronics. Cavender stumbled into the electronics distribution business after college, but has stayed for 30 years after finding she liked the industry's pace, the people and the problem-solving.

How long have you been in the distribution business and how did you become interested in the electronics industry?

I have been in the business 30+ years! I found my way into the electronics industry almost by accident while I was in college, and somewhere along the way it stopped feeling accidental. I like to joke that this industry is a little like the mob: once you're in, you can't get out, but the truth is I stayed because I came to love the people, the pace and the challenge of helping solve real problems. What started as chance turned into a career I've been proud to build.

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

What I've found most rewarding is that this business is really about people, problem-solving and constant evolution. Yes, we deal in components, lead times and supply chain challenges, but at its core, the work is about helping someone solve a problem, avoid a costly mistake or keep an important project moving. There's a lot of satisfaction in being able to bring clarity and help when things get complicated.

It's also been very cool to grow up in this industry and watch how much technology has changed over the past 30 years. I've seen us go from paper files, fax machines and printed catalogs to digital sourcing, e-commerce and instant access to information. I've watched applications become smaller, smarter, faster and more demanding across medical, industrial and ruggedized environments. Just when you think the technology has gone as far as it can go, it keeps moving.

What means the most to me is being part of an organization that has stayed true to its roots while still embracing change. The tools have changed, the pace has changed and the industry has changed, but the importance of relationships, product knowledge and taking care of customers has not. I think that balance is pretty special. You can evolve without losing the part of who you are that made people trust you in the first place.

Briefly describe your organization.

Kensington Electronics is a family-owned electronic components distributor and custom cable assembly partner based in Austin, Texas. We support customers in demanding markets by combining strong product knowledge, responsive service and value-add capabilities that help solve problems, not just ship parts. We've been in the industry a long time, and while we continue to evolve with technology

and customer needs, we've stayed rooted in relationships, reliability and doing right by the people we serve.

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

One thing that has really shaped our recent thinking is that we do not believe in leading with, 'If it's not broke, don't fix it.' In my experience, that mindset can make companies slow, comfortable and eventually irrelevant. We believe it's healthier to keep evaluating how we work, where we can improve and what we need to do now to support where the business is going, not just where it has been.

That has shown up in a few important ways. We are embracing AI and other modern tools in the workplace to help us work smarter, communicate better and create more efficiency internally. We are also paying close attention to the next generation of employees and what they need to be successful, because their expectations around communication, technology, flexibility and development are not always the same as the generations before them. I think good leadership means recognizing that and adapting instead of expecting everyone to fit an older model.

At the same time, we continue to invest in staff and infrastructure to support growth. For us, that means being willing to strengthen the organization before the pressure forces it, not after. We are proud of our roots, but we also believe staying relevant requires curiosity, willingness to change, and the discipline to keep building for the future.

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?

I have found real value in the relationships and conversations that come out of the annual ERA conference. Kensington has always believed that strong rep partnerships are part of the reason for our success, so one of the things I enjoy most is the opportunity to spend time with our reps while they are in Austin and strengthen those relationships face to face.

I also really enjoy the breakout sessions. They tend to spark good internal conversations when I get back, and in some cases they have led to changes in how we think or how we operate. Sometimes the biggest value is simply being around other people in the industry who make you stop, reflect, and look at your own business a little differently.

EDS SHOWCASE



EDS SHOWCASE

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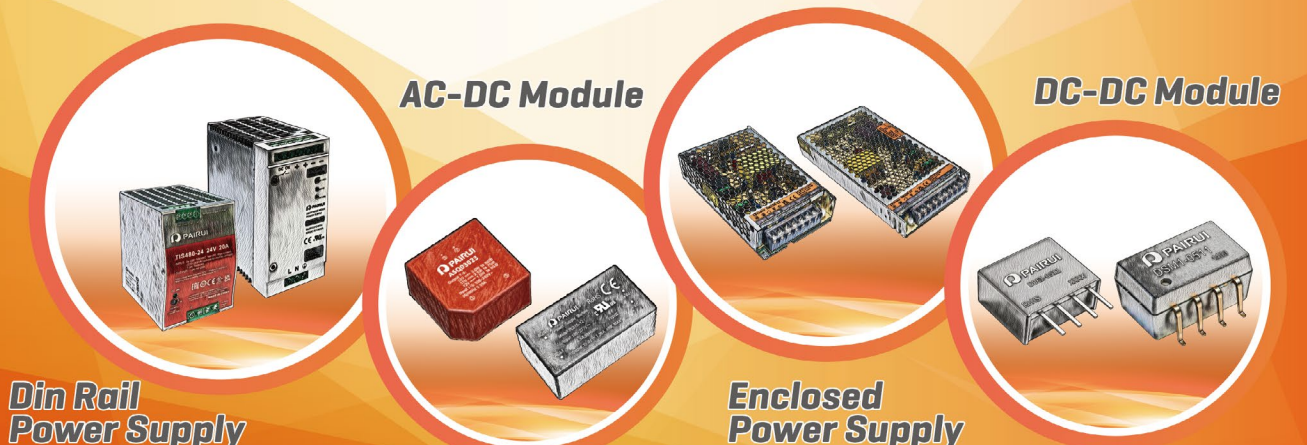
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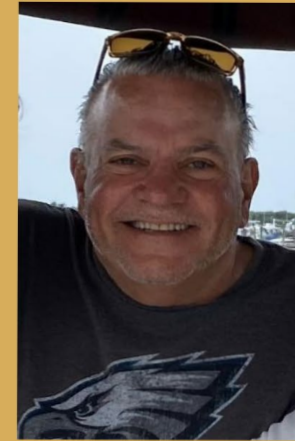
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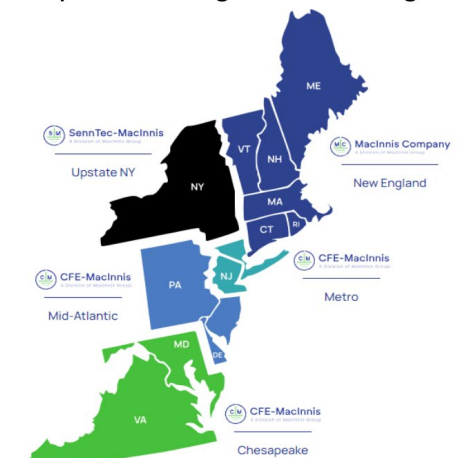
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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Tobi Cornell, CPMR
President, Kruvand Associates
Sr. Vice President, Membership
tcornell@kruvand.com

Spreading the joy of the electronics industry – Come join us!



There is often a lot of discussion amongst all of us on how to bring the next generation into the electronics industry. How do we let them know who we are and what we're about? How do we reach them? When do we start? While some have already figured out plans for their own companies, others are just scratching the surface of how to let people know about what we do.

The truth is—our industry has a story problem, not an opportunity problem. Electronics quietly powers everything: from the phone in your pocket to the satellites above your head, from life-saving medical devices to the cars we drive every day. Yet somehow, many students never hear about the incredible careers behind it. That's where we come in.

Here are some ideas to help us find and cultivate our future co-workers and successors!

Show up and speak up. I want to encourage our members to engage in public speaking! WHAT?! Yes!

If you come across an opportunity to speak to a group of interns at an organization... take it! Let this group of talented college students know about the rep, manufacturer and distributor model early. Share the beauty of working at each type of company, and the possibilities of moving up and exploring each "leg of the stool."

There are also unique opportunities to start this process even earlier. If high schools in your area offer a program called AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), these classes often request parents/professionals to come talk to the students and explain what it is that they do. It's like career day or bring a parent to school day. This opens a door to an industry that many young students don't even know exists. That single conversation might plant a seed that grows into a lifelong career.

Often in high school, students are exposed to our world only through engineering pathways—robotics clubs, aerospace programs, engineering classes, etc. That's fantastic of course—but it's only part of the story. Introducing them to the sales, supply chain, manufacturing, operations and relationship-driven side of the industry gives them a broader, more accessible entry point. Not every future leader needs to design a circuit—some will build the networks that bring those circuits to life.

Create experiences, not just awareness. Awareness is good. Experience is better. To spread the word at high schools and colleges, bring the people in!

Consider:

- Hosting facility tours for students
- Offering job shadow days
- Creating summer internships (even short ones!)

Let them see the warehouse, the lab, hear the conversations and the teamwork. Let them feel the pace and energy. The moment someone experiences the industry, it becomes real—and memorable.

Meet them where they are. The next generation isn't waiting for us to find them—they're already out there. We just need to meet them in the right places:

- Social media (short, authentic, behind-the-scenes content)
- Career fairs (but with energy and storytelling, not just brochures)
- Classrooms and student organizations (AVID, BPA-Business Professionals of America)

Most importantly—be human. Share your journey. Talk about how you got started, what surprised you and what you love. Real stories resonate more than polished pitches. If we want the next generation to find us, we can't wait quietly—we have to show up, speak up and open the door wide.

Because once people understand what we do, they don't just see an industry—they see opportunity, stability, innovation, growth and a chance to be part of something bigger than themselves. The electronics industry has always powered the future. Now it's time we invite the future in.

I was inspired to write this article because of one of the ERA's newest online features! I am so happy to see the new Career Center Hub on ERA.org, as this also allows our members to post job openings in one place that can reach so many people! If a student is interested in our industry, they can now go to one place to find an opening with the opportunity to apply and join this incredible industry.

If you have not yet looked at the link for this new feature, check it out at <https://era.org/career-center-hub/>. There are other tools on this site as well that can be used in your outreach in public speaking!

The more we spread the word, the more our industry will grow and thrive. ■

When a regional sales manager begins to question the value of a manufacturer's representative, it's generally the result of ongoing concerns, underperformance, lack of engagement or missed growth opportunities. During my time at E-T-A, both as a regional and sales manager, I have experienced when the supplier-rep relationship reaches this point. The key when these situations present themselves is not to react emotionally or rush to terminate the relationship but to approach the situation with structure, clarity and a defined path forward.

Though in some cases a quicker decision might be the chosen path, generally a disciplined three-to-six-month action plan can provide both accountability and a fair opportunity to reset expectations between the supplier and rep. If successful, both parties should find themselves in a stronger, mutually beneficial relationship.

The process should generally begin with a direct and candid conversation between the RSM and the rep principal. This initial call sets the table. The RSM should clearly communicate specific concerns, avoiding vague generalities. Whether the issue is a single point of concern or a combination of factors, the feedback needs to be concrete and actionable. This is not about assigning blame; it's about establishing a shared understanding of the gaps that must be closed.

From there, both parties should align on a formal three-to-six-month improvement plan. This plan should include measurable objectives and mutual responsibilities. Key performance indicators might include frequency and quality of communication, new customer prospecting activity, opportunity pipeline creation and engagement with distribution partners. Just as important, the plan should define what success looks like at the end of the period.

An effective way to launch this reset is through a meeting that includes not only the rep principal, but also the rep's sales team. The RSM might consider bringing their own manager into this first session to reinforce alignment and commitment from the supplier side. Transparency is critical here; concerns should be addressed openly with the entire team, not filtered or softened. This ensures everyone understands both the challenges and the expectations moving forward.

Clarity around expectations is essential. The RSM should emphasize the need for increased customer access, as face-to-face engagement and customer access remains one of the most valuable contributions a rep can provide. Focus should be applied to the supplier's priority products and services, as

well as key customer segments, that represent the greatest opportunity for growth. Rather than watering down efforts, the team should establish a manageable list of target accounts where focused energy can produce measurable results. Quality over quantity when it comes to target lists is always best practice.

Execution and follow-up are where action plans succeed or fail. Regular check-ins, ideally every four weeks, if not more frequently, should be scheduled to review progress, address any obstacles and pivot efforts if needed. These conversations should be two-way, open forum exchanges. The rep should feel comfortable providing feedback to the RSM, just as the RSM should feel in sharing thoughts on performance progress. Open communication, honesty and transparency throughout the process are key components to achieving success.

Though planned follow-ups are important, it has always been my experience that what happens in between those scheduled discussions—the unprompted activity and communication between RSM and rep—is where impressions are made or not. Never lose sight of the importance two-way communication plays in building relationships.

At the conclusion of the agreed-upon timeframe, the RSM and rep principal should reconvene to evaluate the results. Were expectations met? Has performance improved in a meaningful and sustainable way? Has a foundation been built that can support growth moving forward? This final review should be focused on the deliverables and objectives established at the outset, removing as much subjectivity and personal bias as possible from the decision.

It's important to acknowledge that not all relationships can or should be salvaged. If meaningful progress hasn't been achieved, the next step may be to end the supplier-rep agreement. While that decision is never easy, it's often the right one for both parties. What isn't working for one, probably isn't working for the other either. A professional, respectful separation allows each side to pursue opportunities better aligned with their goals and capabilities.

Handled correctly, a structured approach ensures that decisions are fair, data-driven and constructive. It gives the representative a genuine opportunity to improve and both parties the opportunity to evaluate the value each is bringing to and receiving from the relationship. In the end, it's not just about evaluating performance, it's about reinforcing accountability, strengthening partnerships and driving sustainable growth together. ■

MANUFACTURING UPDATE

John Guetens
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Supplier-rep relationship: Hitting the reset button



EDUCATION UPDATE

Lori Bruno, CPMR
Vice President, Luscombridge
Sr. Vice President, Education
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**From Austin to Vegas:
Fueling growth through
the power of ERA
education**



Coming off the high energy of our ERA National Conference in Austin this past February, I am struck by a singular realization: The most valuable currency in our industry isn't just the components we sell—it's the knowledge we share.

As I step into my new role as Senior Vice President of Education for the ERA Executive Committee, I am honored to lead the charge in expanding the intellectual toolkit available to our members. My mission is simple: to ensure that every ERA member—whether a seasoned veteran or a rising star—has access to the elite-level training required to navigate a rapidly changing electronics landscape.

Reflecting on Austin: A masterclass in collaboration

The February conference was a testament to the "moxie" that defines our association. From the deep-dive breakout sessions to the keynote presentations, the focus was clear: evolution. We explored the integration of AI in sales, the shifting dynamics of global supply chains and the critical importance of "upfront contracts" in professional negotiations.

What makes the ERA Conference unique is its ability to foster an environment where competitors become collaborators. The education didn't just happen on the stage; it happened in the hallways and over coffee, as we shared best practices to elevate the entire rep model.

Looking ahead: The road to EDS in May

The momentum we built in Austin is carrying us directly into the EDS Leadership Summit in Las Vegas. While EDS is famously the premier venue for matchmaking and executive meetings, I want to challenge our members to view it through an educational lens as well.

EDS is where the "theory" of our February conference meets the "practice" of the boardroom. It is the ultimate classroom for understanding the strategic priorities of our manufacturer and distributor partners. As we prepare for Vegas, I encourage you to approach every meeting not just as a transaction, but as a learning opportunity to better understand the challenges your partners face in 2026.

A wealth of opportunities: The ERA educational ecosystem

The Conference and EDS are our "tent-pole" events, but ERA's commitment to education is a year-round endeavor. We offer a robust ecosystem of learning that many members are only beginning to tap into:

- **The SPARK and STEP programs:** Specifically designed to ignite the careers of our industry's newest talent through mentorship, specialized cohorts and sales training.
- **ERA LIVE:** ERA virtual sessions that are deep dives into everyday business issues that affect your bottom line.
- **The search for excellence:** Our ongoing commitment to providing vetted, industry-specific resources that help rep firms run more lean and professional operations.

- **Chapter-level events:** Localized training that addresses the specific economic and geographic nuances of your territory.

The "let's go" mindset

Education is not a passive activity; it requires an "Andiamo" (let's go!) spirit. As your SVP of Education, I am committed to keeping our curriculum up-front and relevant. We are currently reviewing our educational standards—some of which have remained unchanged for too long—to ensure they reflect the digital and technical realities of today.

I look forward to seeing you all in Las Vegas. Let's continue to learn, lead and prove that the representative model is the most educated and efficient route to market in the world.

See you at EDS! ■

Let's continue to learn, lead and prove that the representative model is the most educated and efficient route to market in the world.

The Mark Motsinger White Pin Internship program continues to be held in high regard by the rep community. We started seeking applications in Fall 2025 and received many responses from rep firms interested in the program. We received solid applications with detailed plans from the rep managers and the prospective interns. We are finding that seeking intern prospects from local universities, junior colleges, trade schools, Handshake.com and general networking with friends and family is working well.

In 2026 we are once again awarding six internships to rep firms around the country. We couldn't be more pleased with the rep firms and interns. All regions of the country are represented with rep firms participating from Texas, Maryland, Wisconsin, Illinois, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

The recipients of the 2026 Mark Motsinger White Pin Internships are:

- Maya Gabbi, Chapman University — Ion Associates
- Olivia Burchstead, University of Kansas — Cover 2 Sales
- Taedra Tsecaris, University of Connecticut — John E. Boeing Co.
- Mary Coakley, University of Massachusetts at Amherst — Coakley Boyd & Abbett
- Erik Timbo, University of St. Thomas — Cain-Forlaw Co.
- Gabrielle Tully, Milwaukee School of Engineering — Brainard-Nielsen Marketing

This year's interns are primarily business school majors and are from prestigious universities. The six individuals have majors in digital marketing, finance, electrical engineering, business admin/marketing, and integrated business engineering. Most will be helping with CRM work, social media and first time buy outreach.

This is the fifth year that the ERA White Pin Group and ERA National have partnered to award internships to manufacturers' representative firms in various regions across the country to help hire and onboard college students as interns during the summer or academic year.

We are very excited to have these interns start their journeys later this Spring in 10-week programs. As we did last year, we will lead two calls with the rep owners and

These interns will bring a variety of fresh perspectives and raw talent, helping their rep firms with innovative ideas and new energy.

their interns during the summer to check in and gain insight on how things are going. Last year's calls were excellent as the interns showed so much energy and enthusiasm.

These interns will bring a variety of fresh perspectives and raw talent, helping their rep firms with innovative ideas and new energy. I'm certain both the interns and rep firms will learn a lot from this experience!

At the end of the internships, Lori Bruno and I will request rep owner testimonials to help promote the program for 2026. For reference, the White Pin Internship program is highlighted on the ERA website under ERA Resources. This site is chock full of internship recommendations and guidelines.

Ellen Coan summarized the program well last year by saying: "The ERA promotes the manufacturers' representative business model through the local chapters' affinity with local colleges and universities in order to find the next generation of reps for the electronics industry. We do this with job fairs, Handshake.com, and of course, this remarkable internship program. It is a cool industry where we are all promoting products for everyone's future. Support for this internship program is critical to our success in the world to come."

Finally, I want to make a moment to recognize the nine individuals who were inducted into the ERA White Pin Group in Austin in February.

The ERA White Pin Group, formed in 1960, at its core, remains an honorary society of like-minded reps who have held volunteer leadership positions at the national ERA level for at least two years. White Pin members are added every year.

Congratulations to all! ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

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New talent, new energy: The 2026 Mark Motsinger interns arrive



INDUSTRY UPDATE

Ellen Coan, CPMR
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Big shoes to fill



Big shoes to fill. That is all I can think of as I step into a new role on ERA's Executive Committee — the Senior Vice President of Industry previously held by Cam English. Cam and I grew up in this industry and his sudden death has been a shock that is not fading. I could not think of a better way to honor him than to step into his chair the Executive Committee and continue his passion and work dedicated to the rep function. He stood by me with every idea I presented and helped me create the NexGen group and Chapter College Initiative and is helping me from above as we launch the ERA Mentoring Program this year. I will step away from the Education chair but I know that Lori Bruno is a great successor who can bring fresh ideas to all the responsibilities there.

Working alongside Ama Derringer, we will network with our local and regional chapters and share ideas for the continued success of ERA. As you may have noticed, we all overlap and cross-train on the ERA Executive Committee and adding Tobi Cornell as the Senior Vice President of Membership will be a great addition.

We've added quarterly chapter leadership meetings, instead of once per year, to maintain communication from ERA National and between chapters as we share best practices

and chapter news. We will encourage less active chapters to find their champions for the ERA message by carrying the delegate report forward, recruiting at college job fairs for new talent and promoting ERA programs and resources.

COLT (Chapter Leadership Training) will take place virtually in the fall and there are so many testimonials from past trainings about the value of it. It will be well attended and feature great collaboration and ideas flowing back and forth between current and future chapter leaders.

The new ERA Mentorship Program will be well under way by the time you read this. It is for all ERA members. We as ERA mentors are proud to share our passion with new talent and early career professionals — ERA mentees — under this program. The 2026 Inaugural Mentor/Mentee group will lead the way and start small and mighty, but ideally grow in 2027. Look for tools to make this an easy initiative for all. My subliminal message to recruit and retain new talent for all is loud and clear.

Continue to share any ideas with me and I will do my best to show the rep model value through this Industry chair. I look forward to the challenges ahead with you all by my side! Together we are better! ■

The new SALT cap: 2025 tax relief may make itemizing deductions worthwhile

The tax landscape for homeowners and high-income earners underwent a significant transformation with the enactment of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed into law on July 4, 2025. For nearly a decade, taxpayers have been constrained by a rigorous \$10,000 limit on state and local tax (SALT) deductions, a cap originally introduced by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. The 2017 legislation increased the standard deduction while simultaneously placing a \$10,000 ceiling on the combined deduction for property, sales and income taxes, impacting homeowners and high-income earners, especially in states that impose an income tax.

Beginning with the 2025 tax year, this \$10,000 cap has been increased to \$40,000 for most individual filers and those married filing jointly, providing a much-needed reprieve for those whose local tax burdens far exceed the previous limit. For taxpayers who are married but choose to file separately, the new limit is set at \$20,000. This expansion is not permanent in its current form, as the cap is scheduled to increase by roughly 1% annually through 2029 before reverting to the original \$10,000 limit in 2030 unless further legislative action is taken.

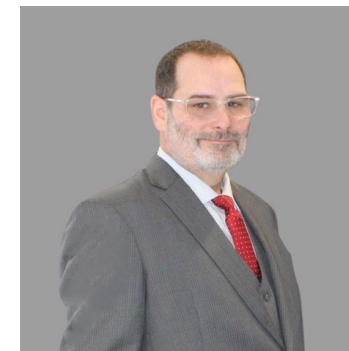
While the increased cap offers broader

eligibility for itemizing, it does include an income-based phase-out for those at the top of the earnings spectrum. For the 2025 tax year, the full \$40,000 deduction begins to diminish once a taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) exceeds \$500,000 (or \$250,000 for those married filing separately). In these instances, the cap is reduced by 30 cents for every dollar of income above the threshold, though the law ensures the deduction will not fall below the original \$10,000 "floor" regardless of how high the income rises.

Because the standard deduction for 2025 remains historically high—at \$15,750 for individuals and \$31,500 for joint filers—taxpayers should evaluate whether their total itemized expenses, including this expanded SALT allowance, mortgage interest and charitable gifts, now outweigh the benefit of the standard deduction.

For many who have simply taken the standard deduction for the past seven years, the 2025 shift may finally make it mathematically advantageous to return to itemizing on Schedule A. ■

Beginning with the 2025 tax year, the \$10,000 SALT cap has been increased to \$40,000 for most individual filers and those married filing jointly.



by J. Christian Manalli
Partner, SFBBG

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@sfbbg.com.

SAVE THE DATE: COLT — DEC. 1 - 3, 2026



**For current and future chapter leaders:
Meet the challenges of serving as an ERA chapter leader!**

- Gain creative ideas and practical knowledge for member recruitment and hosting events
- Learn more about resources and tools available on the ERA website and organizing educational sessions
- Elevate chapter activities and networking opportunities

Three ways courts decide when commissions are “earned”



by Adam Glazer & Adam Maxwell
ERA General Counsel, SFBGG

Adam J. Glazer and Adam Maxwell are attorneys with law firm SFBGG, and serve as general counsel to ERA. They advise reps and rep firms on transactional strategy, succession planning, contract drafting and commission recovery.

You may contact Adam Glazer at adam.glazer@sfbgg.com.

“When is a commission earned?” Perhaps the most deceptively simple question in the manufacturers’ sales representative world, the subject is among the most litigated issue under state Sales Representative Acts.

The reason is straightforward: once a commission is deemed “earned” or “due,” many sales rep statutes trigger short payment deadlines, fee-shifting and potentially double, treble or quadruple damages. What appears at first blush to be an arcane accounting question is often the trigger for statutory liability.

It may be surprising to learn that Sales Representative Acts do not define when commissions are earned, but instead primarily mandate payment once commissions are due and impose penalties on manufacturers for noncompliance. As a result, many disputes focus not only on whether a commission is owed after termination, but also when it became due. A disagreement over timing and entitlement to commissions can transform a routine contract dispute into a significant statutory damages case.

Across the nation, courts tend to analyze the question of when a commission is earned using a familiar framework:

1. The plain language of the contract;
2. The parties’ course of dealing; and
3. Industry custom and practice.

The problem and the genesis of many disputes is that these three sources do not always align and often contradict one another. Courts are then asked to decide which one governs, and the results prove highly fact-dependent and generally unpredictable.

The starting point: The contract controls — until it doesn’t

Courts will begin with the written agreement (if there is one). Where a contract clearly defines when commissions are earned and payable, that language typically gets enforced.

Contractual provisions tying commissions

to specific events such as shipment of goods, receipt of payment or acceptance of orders are routinely applied as written. However, this “contract controls” principle has limits.

Contracts can fail in three recurring ways:

- **Ambiguity.** When a contract provision is subject to more than one reasonable interpretation, it is legally ambiguous. Sometimes, ambiguity arises when a contract uses undefined terms like “procured,” “serviced” or “booked” orders, and other times it arises because of inconsistent tense or improper punctuation (classic example: “Let’s eat Grandma” versus “Let’s eat, Grandma”). Punctuation can not only save lives — it can also save commission dollars.

- **Silence.** Some agreements will explicitly state when a commission becomes payable, but do not define when commissions are earned. Others fail to address post-termination

commissions, particularly for design-in and pipeline deals, where sales cycles can span months or years. Such contractual silence gives rise to legal arguments over how best to fill the “gap” in the parties’ agreement.

- **Internal inconsistencies.** Courts can also struggle to reconcile unfamiliar and seemingly inconsistent provisions in a rep contract (e.g., “earned upon booking” but “payable only if paid”) that produce ambiguity. Careful draftsmanship can help avoid unnecessary judicial interpretation.

When any of these issues arise, courts may deem a contract ambiguous and move beyond its plain language, turning to extrinsic evidence to guide their interpretations.

Reality check: Parties’ course of dealing can override the paper

As discussed in our breakout session at the 2026 ERA Conference in Austin, when a contract is ambiguous, courts frequently examine how the parties actually conducted business.

When the contract, the course of dealing and the parties’ understanding all point in the same direction, disputes between manufacturers and sales reps over when commissions are earned become far less likely.

(continued from previous page)

All too often the contract says one thing, but the parties did another. It is not unusual to see this in relationships involving long-term accounts, where informal adjustments get made over time.

In ongoing commercial relationships, the parties’ performance history is often the best evidence of what they understood the contract to mean. Courts can look beyond ambiguous written agreements to the parties’ conduct in determining entitlement to commissions, and will strongly consider consistent conduct. Evidence that the principal benefited from the rep’s performance under that pattern is one key factor that gets evaluated.

This can prove especially relevant in the electronics industry, where sales reps are often paid on reorders and long-term relationships naturally evolve beyond the original contract terms. The stronger and more consistently a course of dealing is found that varies from the contract terms, the more likely a court is to recognize an implied modification to the contract and reject a strict textual defense.

This underscores an important but often overlooked point: if the parties intend to modify their working relationship, those changes should be documented. At minimum, unilateral deviations by a principal should be promptly addressed. Despite the power imbalance, unfavorable deviations by a principal should be met with some form of protest by the rep, and repeated deviations (e.g. commission rate reductions) should generate repeated protests or “reminders” of a protest. Otherwise, a consistent course of dealing such as a reduced rate faces the risk of becoming the new operative agreement in the eyes of a court.

Industry custom fills the gaps

When both the contract and course of dealing leave uncertainty, courts may look to customary industry practice or “usage of trade.” This principle can get applied in commission disputes where the relevant terms in the agreement are absent or ambiguous, and where the parties’ conduct is not consistent enough to establish agreed-upon terms.

Industry norms often include payment of commissions on booked orders, even if shipped later, payment of commissions on reorders originating from the rep’s efforts, and continued commissions post-termination for accounts the rep was responsible for originating, also known as the “procuring cause doctrine.” This common law doctrine can operate as a default rule in many jurisdictions.

Industry custom can be established through expert testimony, or otherwise showing evidence of comparable relationships and trade association standards. Though industry custom normally does not override clear contract language, it can tip the scale where ambiguity exists.

Practical guidance for ERA members

Both manufacturers and sales reps can reduce the risk of disputes by focusing on consistency between what the contract says and how the relationship actually operates. That begins with drafting agreements that do more than outline general expectations: a sales rep agreement should clearly define when commissions are earned and what payments are due after termination.

Clear contracts are a strong starting point, but they may not prove enough as relationships develop and grow. Whenever practical, the parties should attempt to contemporaneously document changes (or objections to changes) to the contract, and preserve any communications that reflect changes, accommodations or informal understandings between the parties. These details may seem routine, but they frequently serve as decisive evidence in determining when a commission was truly earned.

Manufacturers and reps alike benefit from the discipline of aligning on expectations, documentation and conduct. When the contract, the course of dealing and the parties’ understanding all point in the same direction, disputes over when commissions are earned become far less likely, and far easier to resolve if they do arise.

Clarity requires consistency

Rarely does a single source determine when commissions are earned. Instead, answering that question can require consideration of contract language, course of dealing and industry custom. In the end, consistency across contract and conduct is what leads courts to determine when the commission was truly earned, the question at the heart of so many commission disputes. ■

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW: Casey Cavender

(continued from page 16)

What are some things you enjoy outside of the workplace?

Outside of work, much of my time is centered around the things that matter most to me personally. Raising my two children, my 12-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter, is at the heart of that and has shaped me in more ways than I could count. Being their mother has taught me a lot about resilience, perspective and the importance of showing up consistently, even on the hard days.

I also care deeply about supporting and encouraging women. In an industry that is still very male-dominated, I think it matters that women see other women leading, building and creating meaningful things. Outside of business, I invest a great deal of energy into that through a women's group I started called Gather and Grow and through my brand, Feel Good. Build Belief., which is centered on encouragement, honesty and helping women recognize their own strength. That work is very personal to me, because I know how powerful it can be when women feel seen, supported and reminded of what they are capable of.

For me, those things are closely connected. Whether I'm raising my children, leading in business or building something meant to encourage women, it all comes back to creating stability, belief and a sense of possibility for other people.

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

One thing people may not know about me is that I'm a twin, and my twin also works with me. That has added a unique dynamic to both my work and personal life. It has definitely made for some interesting moments over the years. ■

MEMBER SERVICES

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

- **BUDE MARKETING SYSTEMS** is a leading provider of point-of-sale (POS) reporting. Call 708-301-2111 or email sales@buddemarketing.com.
- **EDGEWATER RESEARCH** offers research published on technology, digital advertising, e-commerce and consumer. Visit 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.
- **JJM SEARCH** is the global executive search firm founded by Carla Mahrt, a 20-year electronics industry veteran. Visit jjmsearch.com.
- **LECTRIX** is a results-driven marketing company that serves electronics manufacturers, suppliers and representatives. Visit 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, or 888-297-2750 x709.
- **SCHOENBERG FINKEL BEEDERMAN BELL & GLAZER LLC** offers legal Expert Access services to all ERA members. Visit sfbg.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).
- **ZENODE** has AI-based tools that transform the labor-intensive, days-long process of crossing BOM components into a minute-per-part evaluation, providing reps with the sourced documentation and speed they need to deliver accurate results while augmenting their professional judgment and engineer relationships. Visit zenode.ai. ■

Scan QR code for more ERA Member Services information:



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Chapter News reports the activities of the active regional/local 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.

ERA CHAPTERS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

ERA is proud to announce the 2025 Cameron English Chapters of the Year award recipients! The awards were based on four categories: Education, Networking, Membership and Special Projects.

The award recipients are:

Education: Minnesota ERA, for hosting an impressive and valuable 3-hour generative AI “deep dive” educational session with Sam Richter as the presenter, and a networking lunch afterwards.

Networking: ERA Canada, for its tremendously successful “November 2 Remember” event that welcomed 150 industry professionals who brought unwrapped toys in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Membership: Southern California ERA for its participation in the Anaheim Electronics & Manufacturing Show and the Del Mar Electronics & Manufacturing Show, two major industry events that draw engineers, manufacturers, distributors and decision-makers from across the region. The shows provided a valuable opportunity to network with current ERA members and strengthen relationships.

Special Projects: ERA Metro NY for its successful golf event, held annually in memory of Steve Alford, who was the Chapter president for many years. This special event allowed chapter members to network with many others in the field and enjoy a day of fun and golf.

Congratulations to all of the recipients and to all of the chapters who submitted events for judging!

ARIZONA

Arizona ERA recently hosted an event at Arizona State University in collaboration with the IEEE Club. Eight students attended, ranging from sophomores to graduate students. While it was a smaller group, the engagement level was outstanding. The students were actively interacting with members of the Chapter Board of Directors—and while free food always helps capture a college student’s attention, the conversations and questions showed genuine interest. Building on this success, we are planning another session with the IEEE Club and are also coordinating meetings with Grand Canyon University.

On April 2, Arizona ERA hosted an in-person networking event featuring two distinguished guest speakers: Ed Smith, CEO of

ERA National, and Eric Hertz, Executive Vice President at Axon. The event was well attended, with 45 members of our industry community joining us.

The evening opened with Rick Dale, Arizona ERA President, who honored the memory of Cameron English with a moment of silence. Eric Hertz then shared an insightful Axon update, emphasizing why strong partnerships between representatives, suppliers and distributors are critical to Axon’s success. Ed Smith followed with a high-level industry outlook, highlighting the growing importance and impact of AI within our industry.

Thank you to all the representatives, suppliers and distributors who continue to support Arizona ERA. A special thank-you goes to our event sponsors: ERA National, Avnet and Master Electronics.

Please be sure to mark your calendars for Sept. 30 for the Arizona ERA annual golf tournament. If you would like to be added to the distribution list for chapter updates, please contact Alicia Doten at alicia.doten@tsc-kruvand.com.

CAROLINAS

Carolinas ERA made a strong showing at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Career Fair in February.

Rob Brunson and Buzz Reynolds manned the chapter booth and had an incredibly energetic day connecting with students and professionals. They had a steady stream of visitors stopping by, curious about ERA and the exciting world of manufacturers’ sales representatives.

They also had productive discussions with UNC Charlotte staff about collaborating on future seminars focused on technical sales and the manufacturers’ rep model—stay tuned for more on that!

The chapter hosted its annual DTAM presentation in March, where it also awarded both a rep and a distributor member with an educational scholarship.

The fall CERA golf tournament will be Oct. 8. Stay tuned for registration details.

CHICAGOLAND-WISCONSIN

Chicagoland-Wisconsin ERA’s annual Summerfest outing will be held on Thursday, June 25 at the Miller Oasis Stage in Milwaukee. Electronic industry reps, distributors and manufacturers are welcome to network, eat, drink and enjoy some great music. Attendees will need to purchase tickets online beforehand or at the gate.

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METRO NY

Join ERA Metro NY for the annual Steve Alford Memorial golf event! It will be a day of golf (or dinner-only, if you prefer), a cocktail party and dinner at one of the Top 100 Golf Courses in the U.S.! This event will take place Monday, June 22, at the St. George’s Golf Club in East Setauket, N.Y. Registration and breakfast will start at 10:30 a.m. and shotgun start at 12:20 p.m. There will be prizes, games and a 50/50 raffle! The event will benefit the Long Island Cares Harry Chapin Food Bank to benefit veterans.

Register here: <https://era.org/era-metro-ny-spring-2026-steve-alford-memorial-golf-outing/>.

MINNESOTA

Minnesota ERA manufacturers’ reps: it has become clear in recent months that there is a demand for a NexGen special interest group at the local level in Minnesota. Rep firms, consider nominating your early-career/rising star employees to ERA’s NexGen group. The goals of the local NexGen group would be: Giving new-to-the-industry and younger members a sounding board for questions and topics pertaining to the industry; providing an educational approach to best practices in the industry as a manufacturers’ rep; navigating common challenges and hurdles facing new salespeople trying to establish themselves; creating a strong network of young leaders to “carry the torch” and bridge the generational gaps in the industry; discussing strategies to promote the rep model and evangelize the benefits of the rep network to manufacturers and customers; and cultivating ideas for attracting and retaining future talent in the electronics industry.

Rich Ostrom of Northport Engineering is planning an inaugural networking outing at a local brewery within the next few months to get the local NexGen group kicked off. In addition, we are organizing a chapter event in June which will include a separate discussion hour for the NexGen group as well.

Find out more about the NexGen group at: <https://era.org/about-era/era-next-generation-special-interest-group/> or contact Rich Ostrom at rostrom@northporteng.com with questions.

NEW ENGLAND

New England ERA hosted a great virtual session in March, with host Turner Time Management. The session dived deep into practical productivity strategies using Microsoft 365 and AI-powered Copilot.

In June, the chapter will host a masterclass and networking dinner with Chris Lins. The chapter’s annual golf tournament will take place Thursday, Oct 1. Stay tuned for more details on both of these upcoming events.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Office 365 Training Series. The chapter’s monthly Microsoft Office 365 training series is one of the best-kept secrets in the industry and one of the best values, too. Through a partnership negotiated with a Microsoft Certified Trainer, we offer this at a significantly reduced cost for ERA members! Sessions cover a wide range of productivity and sales-effectiveness topics designed to help your team get more out of the tools you already use every day. Remaining sessions in 2026: May 12; June 9; July 14; August 11; September 8; October 13; November 3; and December 8.

Del Mar Electronics Show — April 22 & 23. We’re looking forward to seeing many of you at this premier exhibition, where the surf meets the turf at the Del Mar Racing Grounds. Stop by the SoCal ERA booth to connect with the team and get the latest on upcoming events.

San Diego Social — Coming this summer/early fall. Dates will be announced soon. Keep an eye on your inbox!

10th Annual SoCal ERA Golf Tournament — Save the Date: August 31. Mark your calendars. We’re heading back to Alta Vista Country Club for our annual golf tournament, and once again we’ll be proud to support Operation Homefront, a non-profit dedicated to building strong, stable and secure families for our military service members and veterans. Sponsorship opportunities and registration links will be coming your way in the weeks ahead.

Sagebrush Social — Save the Date: September 24, 5:00–7:30 p.m. Our beloved Sagebrush Social returns to the Sagebrush Cantina on September 24. This year marks the 21st anniversary of this SoCal ERA tradition; a testament to the incredible community you’ve helped build. More details to follow.

Year-End Economic Update — November 2026. We’re planning to welcome back CommerceWest Bank CEO Ivo Tjan for his annual year-end economic update, complete with a networking social before and after. Additional details will be shared as they’re confirmed.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Save the date for Pacific Northwest ERA’s Golf Tournament, scheduled for Friday, August 21 at Legion Memorial Golf Course in Everett, Wa. The event will raise money for Toys for Kids. More details to come! ■

**SAVE THE DATE
FOR STEP AND COLT IN
FALL 2026**

ERA's STEP (Sales Training for Electronics Professionals) will return this fall for its fifth year. It will take place Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2026. This live, virtual training, sponsored by TTI Family of Specialists, will include an array of useful topics and be conducted by a mix of professional sales trainers and electronics industry experts. Stay tuned for information throughout the summer regarding registration information and a program agenda.

COLT (Chapter Officer Leadership Training) will also take place virtually once again this fall, Dec. 1-3. Open to all ERA chapter leaders and potential leaders, COLT is a virtual training series that is fun and collaborative, focused on effective chapter management and planning tactics. COLT is your opportunity to: connect with other chapter leaders; gain creative ideas and practical knowledge about member recruitment; learn how to successfully host different types of chapter events; and leverage ERA National resources to enhance your chapter.

Whether you're currently in a chapter leadership role or aspiring to one, don't miss this valuable training. ERA National offers this program free of charge to our members! Registration will open in August.

**ERA ANNOUNCES
RECIPIENTS OF 2026
WHITE PIN INTERNSHIPS**

The ERA White Pin Group is pleased to announce six Mark Motsinger White Pin summer internships for 2026. They are: Maya Gabbi, Chapman University - Ion Associates (Texas); Olivia Burchstead, University of Kansas - Cover 2 Sales (Maryland); Taedra Tsecaris, University of Connecticut- John E. Boeing Co. (New Hampshire); Mary Coakley, University of Massachusetts at Amherst-Coakley Boyd & Abbett (Massachusetts); Erik Timbo, University of St. Thomas- Cain-Forlaw Co. (Illinois) and Gabrielle Tully, Milwaukee School of Engineering - Brainard-Nielsen Marketing (Illinois).

"We are excited to welcome this cohort of summer 2026 interns and congratulate the rep firm recipients," said Kingsland Coombs, CPMR, CSP, chair of the ERA White Pin Group. "These interns will bring a wealth of new ideas and raw potential that will spark innovation within our rep firms. I look forward to seeing the growth and valuable insights that will come from this collaboration."

ERA launched the White Pin internship program in 2022 as a way to help the rep community introduce the rep model to college students and attract, hire and retain young people to keep the electronics industry fresh and relevant. The program allows rising college juniors or seniors to work for a manufacturers' representative firm over the summer months to gain a better understanding and hands-on experience of the electronic components industry.

**ERA AWARDS LIFE
MEMBER RECOGNITION
TO FIVE ERA MEMBERS**

In February 2026 at the national ERA Conference, ERA awarded Life Membership recognition to Carol Cohen (Indiana-Kentucky), George DeVoe (Indiana-Kentucky), John Latimer (Northern California), Mark Conley (Northern California) and Clark Moulthrop (Northern California).

ERA congratulates these five individuals on their Life Member status and recognizes the extraordinary time, talent and effort they have dedicated to ERA and the manufacturers' rep function within the electronics industry.

ERA Life Members are individuals who have been employed by or associated with one or more firms as members in good standing of the association (regular, at-large or international) during a 20-year period, and are nominated by fellow chapter members at biannual ERA Board meetings.

**IN MEMORIAM:
CAMERON ENGLISH,
CPMR**

With profound sadness, ERA must announce the sudden passing of Cameron English, CPMR, Senior Vice President of Industry on the ERA Executive Committee, and President of English Technical Sales. Cam served ERA and this industry faithfully for many years. He has served on the ERA Executive Committee since 2019 and was the "dean" of ERA's Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT) initiative for the past 5 years. He was the recipient of the 2024 Jess Spoons White Pin Award and Scholarship.

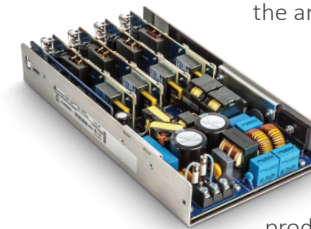
Cam was known to the Board, staff and members as a positive and passionate advocate for manufacturers' reps and the rep model in this industry. He was also passionate about ERA Chapter activity, training new chapter leadership and growing chapter presence globally.

Cam was a graduate of California State University at Fullerton and was the president and CEO of English Technical Sales for more than 40 years. He will be greatly missed. ■

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