

Why Should We Belong To ERA National?

What does ERA do for us?

"Our company belongs to the local Southern California Chapter of the ERA. We attend Chapter Events, Owners' Forums and local trade shows, and we even serve on a committee or two. We get an excellent return on our investment in dues and time from the local Chapter. Why do we need to belong to ERA National as well?"

Here's why.

New and Better Lines

New lines come from many sources – recommendations from our principals, distributors, customers, and other reps. However, not all manufacturers looking for reps routinely ask for recommendations from these sources.

The *Locator* – **The single most widely used source for new rep candidates has been for many years, and still is, the ERA Locator.** Available on line at NO CHARGE to manufacturers, the *Locator* lists every member firm of ERA National, the classes of products they represent, and organizational & contact information. **Non-member firms are not listed.**

Lines Available – These targeted e-mail blasts are issued to member firms only, listing manufacturers currently looking for reps. Most of the manufacturers who list in *Lines Available* are Manufacturer Members of ERA National.

Hot Lines Bulletins – is a service offered by ERA to manufacturers who wish to send an exclusive advertisement for reps in one or more territories. It is sent only to members of ERA National.

CLASP – Computerized Lines Available Show Program – is a listing of manufacturers looking for reps at industry trade shows. Over 150 manufacturers registered to meet with prospective reps at EDS in May. The list was available prior to and at the show only to ERA National members.

For manufacturers who utilize these sources for rep candidates, if you are not a member of ERA National *you are not a player in the manufacturer's rep selection process.*

So...if you don't now need nor ever will need new or better lines, you don't need to belong to ERA National.

Business Management

Publications – The following publications are available from ERA National:

The Representor – a quarterly magazine mailed to all ERA rep and manufacturer members plus several thousand qualified manufacturing executives who sell through reps.

Contract Guidelines

- *Guidelines for Negotiating an Agreement between Sales Representatives and Manufacturers*
- *Guidelines for Negotiating an Agreement between Sales Representatives and their Salespeople*

- *Guidelines for Negotiating an Agreement between Stocking Representatives and Manufacturers*
- *Guidelines for Negotiating Agreements with Sub-Representatives*
- *Guidelines for Becoming a Successful Rep*

Evaluations

- *Evaluation Form: Prospective Principal*
- *Evaluation Form: Prospective Representative*

Other Guidelines

- *Guidelines for Establishing & Benefiting from Rep Councils*
- *POS – Recommended Technical Standards for Distribution Point-of-Sale Reporting*
- *Guidelines for Becoming a Rep*
- *Split Influence Recommendations for the Electronics Industry*
- *Split Commission Request Form*
- *National Code of Ethics*

The Rep Function (for your principals)

- *Why the Best Reps Belong to ERA*
- *Why Use Reps?*
- *Selling Through Manufacturers' Representatives*
- *Cost of Sales Analysis*
- *White Paper: Developing New Markets with Professional Field Sales Reps (Guidelines to Attract and Fairly Compensate Professional Field Sales Representatives to "Pioneer" Your "Missionary" Line)*

Education

- *The Representatives Operations Manual*
- *Commitment to Performance*
- *The Synergistic Selling Course*
- *ERA Rep Firm Business Plan*

Management & Marketing Conferences – ERA National Conferences are three-day affairs devoted exclusively to the common issues of management shared by rep firm owners and manufacturers. They are attended by 200+ rep firm owners and manufacturing sales executives from the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Non-members may attend, but at increased prices.

Free Teleforums – ERA offers a schedule of free teleforums (for members only) on many sales-related topics. These teleforums are presented by Nicki Weiss of Saleswise, a professional coach and the sales columnist in *The Representor*. A veteran ERA rep member or manufacturing executive co-facilitates each teleforum with Nicki to ensure the information and advice are geared to "real-life" issues and situations.

Webinars – ERA's continuing series of Webinars features many speakers/presenters covering educational topics targeted to rep firm owners/managers, salespeople and/or manufacturers. The cost of each hour-long Webinar, which can be attended by multiple people at the same location, is

\$65 for members (\$85 for non-members). PowerPoint and audio files of all past Webinars are available for purchase at just \$20 per program for members (\$30 for non-members).

ERA University – This on-line educational forum taps the resources of 1,500 colleges and universities to offer hundreds courses, available 24/7, on all types of business and personal development subjects. Each course includes 24 hours of interactive instruction, with no textbooks required, at a cost of \$79.

CPMR – The Certified Professional Manufacturers' Representative program is available to ERA National members and other supporting organizations of the Manufacturers' Representative Educational and Research Foundation (MRERF). It is also available to non-members, but at a \$500 per year premium (for three one-week courses offered annually at Arizona State University). CPMR training is an increasingly important factor in rep selection by knowledgeable manufacturers, especially ERA Manufacturer Members.

CSP – The multi-day Certified Sales Professional program, designed for rep firm salespeople, is also available to ERA National members from MRERF at least four times per year in various locations throughout the U.S. It is available to non-members, but again at a higher cost.

So...if you know all there is to know about managing your business, you don't need to belong to ERA National.

Professional Assistance

The ERA **Expert Access** Program is available exclusively to ERA National members. Free consultation (within reason) is available from ERA-affiliated consultants and companies in the following fields:

- Legal
- Fiscal and Tax
- Advertising & Public Relations
- Insurance
- Rep Network Management
- Rep and Distributor Recruitment

ERA also offers a free, confidential **Matchmaker Service**, designed to bring together members who want to forge buy, sell or merge agreements, find a sub-rep, form an alliance, or develop other types of business partnerships.

Tangibles

ERA's *Recognized Resource* list of suppliers provides services and benefits (usually meaning discounts) tailored to meet the needs of reps. They include:

- Enterprise Rent A Car
- Hertz
- Avis
- MRERF – professional advancement
- RepCare – insurance
- FedEx Shipping and FedEx Office services
- Amazon.com
- Office Depot
- Pennywise Office Products
- Empowering Systems – sales automation software
- RPMS – rep software
- MRS Software
- Earle Dunham & Associates – sales mgmt consulting

- Growth Dynamics – sales and management training
- JLH Consulting – rep management and executive recruitment services for manufacturers
- Performance Tech Assoc. – sales and marketing svcs.
- Lifelock - identity protection insurance
- ProBop – business owners' insurance

Intangibles

ERA National's mission is to support the outsourced field sales function in the global electronics industry through programs and activities that educate, inform and advocate for professional manufacturers' representatives and the manufacturers they represent.

- The ERA is a member of the Small Business Legislative Council (SBLC), its Washington-based lobbying organization.
- The ERA maintains organizational or informal alliances with ECA, CEA, CMA, EIF, GEIA, IEEE, JEDEC, MANA, MRERF, NEDA, NEMRA, TIA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, among others.
- The ERA founded and is a supporting member of the Manufacturers' Representative Educational and Research Foundation (MRERF). Among MRERF's primary activities are:
 - Educating the Educators – promoting the inclusion of the manufacturers' representative function in sales & marketing courses and textbooks.
 - Educating rep firm owners/successors and salespeople through its CPMR and CSP programs.
 - Educating the Manufacturers – providing tools and programs for manufacturers' representatives and trade associations to use in educating manufacturers about the outsourced field sales function
- The ERA is a sponsor and a major contributor to the success of the Electronics Distribution Show (EDS)

All manufacturers' representatives benefit from these activities, whether members of ERA National or not. However, the costs of these activities are borne by those rep firms, large and small, who choose to become and remain members of ERA National.

"Everyone owes a part of their time and money to the industry in which they are engaged. No one has a moral right to withhold his or her support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within its sphere."
- Theodore Roosevelt

So...if you feel these activities are unimportant to the future of your business, or you feel the cost of these activities should be borne by others, then you don't need to be a member of ERA National.

Over 700 manufacturers' representative firms, including most members of the Southern California Chapter, feel differently.

(Thanks to Jay Ownby and Tess Hill for this piece.) 100208