

ERA Today



Newsletter of the ERA Southern California Chapter

December 2001

Volume 26, No. 3

OCEE

Orange County Electronics Expo opened its first September show on the worst day of the year. The World Trade Center terrorist attacks occurred early on 9-11 and exhibitor setup began at noon. The show opened to attendees on 9-12, the day millions nationwide stayed home. Hundreds called to make sure OCEE was still happening. Show management sent an email message to exhibitors and attendees, "OCEE opens as scheduled on September 12. As long as there is no indication of danger to our participants, we will not let the terrorist attacks cause us to stop our activities."



Exhibitors and attendees enjoyed the networking reception on the first day of OCEE. The opportunity for casual conversation created a pleasant event.

Of 250 booths sold, only one exhibitor chose not to exhibit and three could not due to travel problems. Wednesday and Thursday overall attendance was off somewhat from the previous year at 1575 compared to 1880. Our team performed massive attendance promotion efforts: 43,000 mailed invitations plus weekly fax and twice weekly emails sent to our database of 13,000 potential attendees.



Tom Mueller and Lori Sprenger of J. Thomas Electronic Sales greet customers during the two day event.

A lot of energy and communication went into this event and it was a success in the eyes of the exhibitors. Of those talked to at show with a contract in hand, over 50% signed up for 2002. The challenge in 2002 is that Wescon is two weeks after OCEE dates. We have already told them ERA SoCal cannot support that show.

The Jack Berman Workshop

STOP "SELLING" AND INCREASE YOUR PERSONAL SALES VOLUME

It was great! If you were among the 70+ folks who attended the October 30th event you were entertained and trained in good selling habits by one of the masters. Jack reminded us the real goal is to help the customer buy. The program was terrific, the pasta dinner delicious, and the fellowship among chapter members excellent. A bunch of distributor folks participated. We enjoyed the program at 4:00, ate at 6:00 and were gone by 7:30.

PC Virus!

Several Chapter members, and even webmaster, Bill Perry, were hit hard by NIMDA and other computer viruses in October and November. Damages included transmission of personal data to dozens of people in their address book; messing up the hard drive; filling the drive with files; repeatedly sending virus loaded messages to acquaintances; causing problems with programs.

Your PC is a target. Back up your data files. Run an antivirus program like Norton. Update your antivirus program weekly. Do not open attached files unless the sender has convinced you there is a reason to do so. A virus usually comes from someone you know.

From ERA National NEWS YOU CAN USE!

This new feature by ERA National contains weekly useful info and comes with Lines Available.

A MESSAGE FROM RAY and, the Tip Of The Week

It's pretty grim out there in most markets right now. So this is the best possible time to be talking to your principals, reminding them that you are sharing in their financial losses and that reducing their field sales efforts can slow or shut down their production lines in the same way that sourcing problems can. Manufacturers should be motivating

(message from Ray, continued)

their reps, not discouraging them with commission cuts!

Keep in mind that, despite all the recent bad news, the professional field sales option has become a highly advantageous and attractive prospect for many companies. So this is also the time to be talking to manufacturers who are still hanging on to their direct sales and proposing that they try outsourcing to professional field sales reps.

And of course, ERA has the tools to help you with these activities ... just ask: info@era.org

Let's be sure not to abandon our established priorities.

What I'm hearing from our rep members, especially those involved in the industrial markets (except perhaps defense and construction), is that sales are really down. Some markets are seeing decreases as high as 50 to 70 percent, and some reps are experiencing similar commission reductions.

My concern is that these frustrating times can lead to a tendency to overreact. So let's be sure that we do not abandon our established priorities. Just as it is critical for customers to maintain their positions with vendors so they can meet demand when the turnaround begins, and just as it is vital for manufacturers to maintain strong field sales efforts to avoid shutting down their production lines, reps must maintain their support of the only organization that speaks for their profession.

For instance, in response to the slowdown, ERA has cranked up activities with EIA (Electronic Industries Alliance), AMRA (Alliance

of Manufacturers' Representatives Associations), and MRERF

(Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Research Foundation). We have one primary goal in our "alliance" efforts - to promote the professional field sales function as the better option for both manufacturers and customers. That's a job that only an association can do ... and it's just one of many such tasks ERA performs 24/7.

Insurance

A TIP FROM PAT BROWN THAT YOU CAN USE TODAY

Rep Firm Owners: If you are facing the unfortunate situation of having to lay off an employee, here's an important tip from Pat Brown, one of our benefits experts.

When releasing an employee enrolled in your group benefits plans, the departing employee must be provided with:

- 1) a Continuation Rights Notice; and
- 2) a Certificate of Creditable Coverage.

There are severe penalties for non-compliance, so if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Pat ABPpbrown@aol.com 847-256-1331 or John Doyle jdoyle@snip.net 610-971-2100 for advice and answers. It DOES NOT MATTER if you are an ERA RepCare insurance program participant. As an ERA member, you have free access to assistance from these two veteran insurance and employee benefits consultants.

Fictitious Name

Your filing (DBA) is good for five years. When did you last renew it?

ERA Breakfast

with your ERA friends continues to be a fun way to share information and solutions to problems. Enjoy

people who share your interests. You can still get to the office at a reasonable time.

*** ORANGE COUNTY:**

Every Friday at 7:00
Mimi's Cafe, 17th Street at 55
freeway, Tustin.

*** SOUTHBAY:**

First Fridays at 7:00
Luigi's 5267 W. Rosecrans,
Manhattan Beach.

*** SAN FERNANDO VALLEY:**

Second Fridays at 7:30
Lamplighter, DeSoto & Nordhoff,
Chatsworth.

Chapter Directory

Our chapter directory on the chapter web site, www.erascal.org, was totally revamped and went online in July. Members enter their own directory data and make corrections and updates without intervention by the ERA office. Data entry is quick and easy. Users, whether customers looking for products, or manufacturers looking for reps, can easily use the cross references and find members by product, manufacturer or company name. A printed version is planned for January, 2002.

OCEE

OCEE 2002 is September 11 & 12
For full information: 949-551-2890
info@occe.net www.occe.net

Computer Projector

The Chapter-owned computer projector is available for your presentations and meetings. It makes meetings come alive with full-screen computer graphics, animation and sound. It also will project VCR images on a screen. It's still \$100 per day. Call the office. 949-551-5200

Chain E-Mails

--real or hoax?

From Kim Komando

You've probably got them--the various chain e-mails making their way through the digital realm. The Internet has proved to be fertile ground for sharing personal stories, as well as for sowing wild rumors and spreading hoaxes. Before you forward a message that others think is true, check it out to see if it's for real:

www.skeptdic.com, the Skeptic's Dictionary

www.vmyths.com, Vmyths guide

www.snopes.com/ulindex.htm,

Urban Legends

www.sarc.com, Symantec Security Response

QT EXTRA: Watch out for the "Vote" virus Watch your e-mail Inbox for viruses masquerading as a poll to vote for or against war. The subject lines may read: Fwd:Peace BeTweeN AmeriCa and IsLaM! or Fwd:This War Must Be Done!

Either way (or if there's a variation on the theme), don't launch the attached file (which may be named WTC.exe or Anti_TeRRoRisM.exe), as these are mass-mailing worms that attempt to replicate themselves, delete and modify files on your hard drive and compromise your system's security settings.

OCEE-2002

The Strategic Move

As the world economy ground deeper into the 2001 recession, company managers started searching for ways to ensure company survival. They knew recessions always end, and recovery always follows.

The first steps are the all familiar lay-offs, plant closings, product line cut backs, and tough cash flow management. These are all things

that keep the bottom line black when the top line is going South in a hurry. All this is knee jerk, the winners do it well, some others just survive, and some pass on.

After they stabilize the company, the big-time winners go on strategic thinking. They develop and implement plans to make the company emerge from the recession on a growth path that will make them stronger, more profitable, and larger than at the outset of recession.

One winning strategic move for 2002 is to concentrate the company's trade show energy on regional events that focus on a specific market. Exhibit space at regional shows is substantially less expensive than their larger brethren. For the same cost as exhibiting in one larger show, you can rifle shoot three or four regional shows. You get more bang for your buck.

Orange County Electronics Expo is one of the best strategic moves for 2002. Show your stuff in the heart of the U.S. Electronic Marketplace for only \$650 per 10' x 10' exhibit space including carpet and electricity. Get more information and sign-up at www.ocee.net.

Our Chapter IN 2000/2001 had:

- 5 Chapter Events
- 7 Owner's Forums
- 2 Tabletop Shows
- 1 OCEE Trade Show
- 74 Friday Breakfasts

Pictures

Did you notice there were not very many photos in this ERA Today? At the October 30 Jack Berman seminar and Chapter Meeting my 35 mm camera disappeared along with many Chapter event pictures.

ERA SoCal Chapter Officers

President,
Dan Parks

Chairman of the Board,
Bill Quinton

Vice President,
George Gibbons

Treasurer,
Steve Geldman

National Delegate,
Bob Baxter

Membership,
Bob O'Brien

Government Affairs,
Ron Schwartz

OCEE Show Director,
Gary Smith

Trustees:
Bill Sullivan,
Harrison Frank,
John Buffa,
Rich Grenn

ERA SoCal Association Office

Executive Director
Dennis McGillis

Assistant Director
Frances McGillis

15186 Normandie Ave.
Irvine, CA 92604-2933
949-551-5200 phone
949-551-1162 fax
www.erascal.org
info@erascal.org