
CPMR Translates Well Into Any Language

The benefits of training translate well. If you have any doubts, just listen to what attendees at MRERF's CPMR program have to say concerning the program's latest sessions conducted earlier this year at Arizona State University.

This year for the first time, members of the executive committee of the International Union of Commercial Agents and Brokers (IUCAB) audited the MRERF program. Their positive views of CPMR serve as evidence that the need for rep training is one that is equally important, whether the training is aimed at U.S.-based reps or those of other countries.

Basically, the CPMR program has been developed to:

- Provide executive education for owners and managers of commercial agency firms.
- Address the professional advancement needs of individuals already well established as commercial agents.
- Provide a recognizable mark of excellence for the top achievers in the field.
- Establish benchmarks of performance for multiple-line commercial agency organizations.

The program entails:

- Residence on a college campus one week a year for three years, taking courses designed for the owner of a commercial agency firm.
- Passing an exam at the end of each year's session.
- Creating a strategic business plan for the company.

Feedback from several IUCAB members in attendance indicated that they felt the CPMR classes provide "excellent opportunities for a guided look at the business of commercial agency firms, the development of business plans and objectives, communication aspects, required business standards and much more. In addition, the program showed that the presentations of the highly qualified professors as well as the learning material are in principle equally applicable to European commercial agency firms."

Typical of the opinions of IUCAB members in attendance was that voiced by Simonetta Maffizoli, vice president of IUCAB, who maintained that a program such as CPMR "could be of assistance to European reps, especially if we can succeed in gaining the interest of European manufacturers. As those manufacturers increase their interest in having certified reps working on

their behalf, then there will be a greater incentive on the part of reps to participate in the program."

Maffizoli said that while European reps may have little interest in certain parts of the program (e.g., legal and legislative), "in a more globalized world, we all have similar problems and opportunities. Therefore, there are similar solutions to problems that we can learn together."

She also pointed to the networking benefits that such a program offers attendees. "The possibility of exchanging opinions with students who come from different parts of the world is very beneficial," she noted.

Facing Universal Challenges

Maffizoli is hardly alone in her

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Tom Wilson, CPMR



George Hayward



Dr. Marilyn Friesen

praise of CPMR. According to MANA District 8 Director Tom Wilson, who carries the CPMR designation, "Reps play a unique role in the marketplace, but the challenges of running a rep firm are universal. European agents and brokers will find the similarities between their business and North American rep businesses to be amazingly similar. There will be tremendous opportunities for reps from both sides of the Atlantic to learn from each other during their CPMR training. Most of them will develop professional and trading relationships that will endure for many years." Wilson, who was present during this year's CPMR program, is president of Emerald Marketing, Inc., Seattle, Washington.

Echoing those thoughts is George Hayward, United Sales Associates, Cincinnati, Ohio,

who serves as MANA's director of European development. According to Hayward, "Education is global and CPMR is the global — not the national — certification course for manufacturers' representatives and commercial agents throughout the world." He adds that the networking benefits of CPMR are considerable. "With the exception of legal issues, rep issues are the same globally. Students learn a great deal from each other."

He added that the overwhelming consensus of IUCAB executive committee members regarding CPMR is "very positive and it is worthy of their endorsement." He said that IUCAB has agreed to encourage participation in the course by member associations and that members and IUCAB will promote the course through association newsletters, papers, on web sites and meetings, etc.

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The Benefits of Networking

And finally, based upon her interaction with members of the IUCAB executive committee, Dr. Marilyn Friesen, executive vice president of MRERF, just as others have done, points to the benefits of meeting reps from other corners of the world. "In the past," she explained, "there have been in attendance a number of students from the European Union, United Kingdom and Asia. Reps conducting business in those areas have highly developed skills that have enabled them to survive in the most difficult of times. Recently, North American agencies have also experienced rapid changes relative to shifting expectations. Discussion among reps the world over about a multitude of 'what is and what if's' is a benefit to all concerned. Further, it is a benefit with far greater value than the cost of three years' tuition in the CPMR program. In fact, it's a benefit that keeps on giving as many study groups and newly created networks of friends stay together for years."

She concluded by saying, "I considered it an honor and found the experience of having the IUCAB executive committee present during the CPMR program very enjoyable. Such an experience forces one to become less geographically self-centered. Being self-centered is an attitude that will serve us (U.S. reps) even less well as the marketplace shrinks and transcontinental relationships become the norm."

Interested reps worldwide can learn more about CPMR by visiting www.mrerf.org. □

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