

MANA Continues Hannover Participation

This year, as it has for several years, MANA headed a delegation of attendees at the Hannover Trade Fair in Germany. Feedback from MANA members who participated indicate that they achieved their stated goal of meeting with prospective principals to represent in the United States. Interviews with attendees indicate that just a few days following their return to their offices, all of them were knee-deep in preparing follow-up presentations and information for manufacturers they met with, and several reps indicate they expect to sign new principals over the next couple of months.

According to Jerry Leth, MANA's director of member services, "Our stated goal was to assist our members in locating foreign manufacturers to represent in this country. To that end, we facilitated meetings between our members and manufacturers exhibiting at the show." Unlike trade shows and missions to emerging economies, a visit to Hannover helps MANA members connect with foreign manufacturers who may have technologies and products not available from North American manufacturers.

More than 5,000 manufacturing exhibitors filled 27 exhibit halls over the course of the five-day event

that MANA has attended over the last few years. As a part of its participation, MANA also provided attendees with a "home away from home" with its exhibit space at the show. More than one MANA member cited the benefits of having that location where they could just sit down and unwind or catch up on business details.

George Hayward, MANA's manager of international development, is one of the first to weigh in with his views on the Hannover Fair. According to Hayward, as MANA members "checked into MANA's exhibit, they reported success in their meetings with manufacturers and awe at the size of the Fair. Overall, they were all licking their chops like kids in a candy shop." He continues that the reps in attendance were very pleased with the association's

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Manning the MANA booth are, left to right, Walter Kramer, director of European development; George Hayward, manager of international development; and Jerry Leth, manager of membership.

efforts at setting up appointments and providing them with a "home base" to sit down and unwind. He adds that those in attendance agree that the Fair was a huge opportunity for them that they never would have realized until experiencing it in person.

The Value of Participation

According to Walt Brooks, W.C. Brooks Co., Inc., Austell, Georgia, the move from passive to proactive MANA member has paid dividends for him following his participation in the association-sponsored trip. He explained that several days after his return to the United States, "It's only now that I'm just beginning to benefit from the trip. In the past I'd describe myself as somewhat of a passive member of MANA, but this time I decided to participate in what the association was offering. From my perspec-

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Left to right: George Hayward visits with Jim Bickel, SINO, UJE; and Tony Higgins, APH Associates, Inc., at the MANA booth at Hannover Fair.

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tive, we tried to do something different this time. We scoped out the show in advance, pre-qualified people we wanted to speak with, and with the assistance of MANA, we were able to line up a number of very beneficial meetings with prospective principals." Those meetings generated enough interest, he said, that "we've got at least three or four contacts that I'm confident will come to fruition." He adds that he was able to cover each of the shows' 27 exhibit halls.

Something else he tried this year that was beneficial was taking pictures of the exhibits where they met with principals. "We made sure we took pictures of the company presidents in their booths. Then we sent the pictures to them as attachments. We figured that would probably be the only picture they got of their booths and they'd remember us for it."

Prior to the trip to Germany, Doug Landgraf, Landgraf-McAbee, Inc., Charlotte, North Carolina, explained he was a little disappointed he hadn't been able to schedule as many appointments as he had hoped for, "but once we got there, I understood why. There was a virtual open-door policy at all of the exhibitor booths. You walk the exhibit floors, visit the booths and make introductions to all the manufacturers you want. Generally, there's very little difficulty in finding the product groups you want. We made a significant investment in terms of time and money to attend the show, and I'd have to say that based on our experience, we really hit a home run. Overall, my appraisal of the show is very positive. It was well-organized, the facilities were great, and MANA did a great job arranging everything for us."

Kudos for MANA

"The MANA booth at the show was a very comforting place," maintains Tony Higgins, The APH Group, Inc., Savannah, Georgia. "You'd go out and

walk through all the exhibits and it was great to have a place to relax.”

Higgins continues, “I was probably shopping for a much broader spectrum of products than many of the other reps were. I was looking in a much broader range for products to be sold nationwide. Thankfully, I absolutely came back with three very strong leads. As a matter of fact, the morning I returned to the United States I even received a call regarding a German company who came into the MANA booth in my absence.”

Jim Bickel, SINO, UJE, Danville, California, explains that his interest in the Hannover Fair was a bit different from others. According to Bickel, “We are a U.S.-based corporation that looks for manufacturers that want to sell their products in China. From that standpoint, the Hannover Fair was excellent.” Bickel says that despite the fact there was a lot of ground to cover, he did well during his stay in Germany. “I’ll admit that after the first day, I was a little disappointed with what I accomplished, but the appointments MANA assisted with all turned out well. We had more than 20 appointments and of that total, I’d say about 13 turned out to be real possibilities for us.”

Bickel notes that this was his first time at the Fair, but he would definitely do it again. “When you consider the assistance that MANA provided in terms of providing a booth, assisting with appointments and some other logistics, you could never do any better on your own. If you tried to do it on your own, covering something like 5,000 exhibitors, you wouldn’t know where to go or what to do.”

Plan Ahead

Richard and Diane Dallmeyer, MDM Marketing Inc., Newton, Massachusetts, were as positive as their fellow MANA members when it came to the results of the Hannover Fair. “We’re already in touch with one line that might materialize this summer. If that happens, then the trip has paid for itself,” says Richard Dallmeyer. One key he offered that helped maximize his Fair attendance was preparation ahead of time. “Even before you leave the United States you should break out of your normal routine and access the Hannover Fair web site. One thing we gained by doing that was to discover a program we could download into our PDAs that allowed us to drill down into virtually any product category. It was of great assistance to us.” He added that MANA was of equal as-



Left to right: Richard and Dianne Dallmeyer, MDM Marketing, Inc., stop by the MANA booth to visit with Jerry Leth.

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Phil Newby



A total of 5,040 exhibitors from 60 countries took part in the eight specialist shows at Hannover Fair 2004 under the slogan, “See Tomorrow. Today.”



Left to right: Walt Brooks, W.C. Brooks Company, Inc.; Tom Turner, Mountain States Reps & Assocs., Inc.; Phil Newby, PT Components, Inc.; and Doug Landgraf, Landgraf-McAbee, Inc. combined forces to visit Hannover Fair.

sistance when it came to trip planning and setting up appointments. In a final bit of advice to any reps who might entertain participating in the Hannover Fair in the future, he said it was important to be flexible. “Don’t be afraid to stretch your language skills and hit the Fair hard from the first day.”

Without knowing it, Phil Newby followed the Dallmeyer’s advice to a tee. Newby, PT Components, Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas, explains that he was one of four reps with similar interests who trekked across the Atlantic to Hannover. “Because we are all virtually in the same business, we set up appointments ahead of time and sent e-mails in advance to principals with information about our agencies. Our approach was to sell all four agencies at once. When you consider that combined we cover 19 states, serve more than 2,000 customers, have five warehouses throughout the United States, and have more than 200 years of combined experience in the power transmission industry, we really had a very formidable delegation. Once we arrived at the Fair, we worked in pairs — two went in one direction and the other two in another direction. Overall, I’d say we got a very good reception from principals. I’m about 90 percent confident that business will result from our participation in the trip.”

He adds that since this was his very first trip overseas or to Europe, he enjoyed the added benefit of the trip being a learning experience. □

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