



PTRA Gives Voice To Rep Concerns

Independent manufacturers' representatives working in the power-motion technology industry have more in common than not with their brethren in other industries. Perhaps one of the most beneficial similarities they share is the fact that there is an industry-specific representative's association that serves as their voice, their advocate and their common meeting ground.

The Power-Motion Technology Representatives Association (PTR A) was incorporated in 1972, and included in its goals are to:

- Optimize the value of independent sales representatives.
- Optimize the value of the rep/principal relationship.
- Safeguard the integrity of the independent manufacturers' rep's profession within the power transmission and motion control industries.

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- Enhance the professionalism of members.
- Operate a stable association.

Earlier this year, MANA announced that effective May 1, PTR A becomes the second industry-specific trade association of professional sales companies to choose MANA as its association management firm.

Many PTR A members also are members of MANA, and an even larger number of PTR A reps have achieved MRERF's Certified Professional Manufacturers' Representative (CPMR) designation. The PTR A board selected MANA to assist in its day-to-day operations and to gain from the synergies that are available to sister organizations resulting from associating with MANA.

The PTR A board will continue to exercise complete control of its own destiny, membership and programs as does MANA's other rep association client, AIM/R. MANA will function as an association management vendor and assist the PTR A board with strategic planning.

Jay Ownby, MANA's manager of strategic alliances, will serve as executive director of PTR A. He will draw upon the 16-person MANA



Jay Ownby

staff to deliver services to the PTR A board and its membership.

According to PTR A Past President Duncan MacDonald, CPMR, of MANA-member agency Engineered Industrial Products, Temecula, California, who served as the association's president in 2003-04, PTR A currently comprises approximately 180 independent manufacturers' representative agencies and 80 allied (manufacturer) companies. Only reps are voting members of the association. "When the organization was formed," he recalls, "one of its initial purposes was to provide for a networking environment where independent reps could meet with each other and have the opportunity to meet with their existing and prospective principals."

Attesting to the value of PTR A's initial goal, Gregg Smith, CPMR, Smith Power Systems,

Dallas, Texas, who currently serves as the association's president, maintains that "to this day PTRA provides the most efficient way for reps to network not only with other reps, but with their principals and prospective principals. There is no other place within our own industry that we can enjoy the type of meetings we currently have. The association is the ideal networking tool."

Visitors to the association's web site (www.ptra.org) will learn firsthand how far the organization has come and how many services it provides today — beyond networking — compared to those beginnings more than three decades ago. While a number of activities are detailed on the association's web site, MacDonald stresses the major activities that PTRA is involved with on behalf of its members:

- **Annual Conference** — This year's meeting took place in San Antonio, Texas, and provided attendees with the opportunity to learn about a number of topics including inside sales and support, health care insurance options, the value of reps to distributors and the impact of globalization.



Gregg Smith

- **Networking and Relationship Building** — MacDonald reiterates the importance of what Smith described when he says, "PTRA provides its members with the opportunity to meet with existing and new manufacturers and for manufacturers to meet their reps." Another valuable tool when it comes to establishing and building relationships between independent reps and their principals is PTRA's *Locator*. Similar to directories available from other rep associations, PTRA's *Locator* allows principals to find reps and reps to find new principals.

- **Communication** — PTRA's quarterly newsletter, *Focus*, available in both printed and online formats, provides timely articles covering business trends/developments, as well as information on member activities, financial and legal matters.

- **Education** — Topical speakers, educational and round table ses-



Bob Newman

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- Following are examples of industrial products sold by PTRA member reps:**
- Bearings
 - Belt Drives
 - Chain Drives
 - Clutches and Brakes
 - Controls and Sensors
 - Conveyors
 - Couplings
 - Electric Motors
 - Gears and Gear Drives
 - Lubricants
 - Motion Control Components

sions, primarily at the organization's annual conference, are geared to enhance professionalism. MacDonald adds that "PTRA is probably the most effective medium for new reps when it comes to exploring educational options. Whether it's learning about CPMR, improving field sales or improving the professionalism of the agency, the association has plenty to offer."

Seconding the view that PTRAs has “plenty to offer” is Bob Newman, CPMR, the association’s immediate past president. According to Newman, Industri/Motion, Inc., Downers Grove, Illinois, also a MANA member, relationship building is high on the list of what PTRAs offers to its members.

“PTRAs offers an environment where it’s easy to network with people you know, whether it’s others who work in your territory or even reps who handle the same lines you do. Instead of viewing the latter as competitors, they become

your friends and confidantes.”

He adds that a major offer of the association remains its annual conference. “While we offer a newsletter, the *Locator*, etc., the annual conference remains our biggest event. That’s where we’ve had real success getting our allied members involved.”

In closing, MacDonald emphasizes that while PTRAs offers plenty of products/services, meetings and networking opportunities for its members and manufacturers, the real benefits of membership accrue when members take advantage of

the opportunity to participate in their own association. “All the benefits of the association,” he says, “result only when individuals contribute. Sure, there will always be those who question what they get for their dues, but when they truly participate in the organization, either by attending the annual conference or volunteering on any of our committees, that’s when they see the real benefits.”

MANA members in the PTRAs product classes are urged to consider dual membership in both organizations.