

What MANA Does Best For Its Members

BY JACK FOSTER

It's relatively easy to sit in an ivory tower and send out products, services or messages to the world. The only problem is that by following that practice there's no real proof that what you're producing provides any value to your audience. That's why this month *Agency Sales* magazine contacted a number of MANA members to ask them what they use and value the most from their association.

Education heads the list of MANA benefits for Duncan MacDonald, CPMR. MacDonald, Engineered Industrial Products, Cerritos, California, and a past president of PTRA, says, "I believe the products and services we have used the most lean heavily toward the education side of things — both for the training of salespeople and management." As to how training and education have contributed to the make up of his staff, he explains that Engineered Industrial Products boasts three CPMRs and three CSPs on board. He adds, "We've also used the papers and articles on rep-specific issues such as rep-principal relations, valuation, etc. On the other hand, we haven't used any insurance or legal services as a direct consequence of MANA. At the same time, we're heavily involved in PTRA and MRERF, so the

lines between those organizations and MANA are a wee bit fuzzy as to where we get our value from. We like all of them."

It's the personal touch that works best. At least that's what Marty Grimes, Assembly Solutions, Inc., Covington, Kentucky, maintains. "Undoubtedly it's the personal attention we get from MANA staff whenever we contact association headquarters. Whether it's Jerry Leth, Jay Ownby, or anyone else, if we have a problem, question or concern, there's someone with experience in the field who can and does help us."

That's not all. "Consider all that *Agency Sales* magazine does. It's the perfect reference source for us. The subjects that are reported on and the trends we read about are a huge help to all of us."

Continuing with praise for the



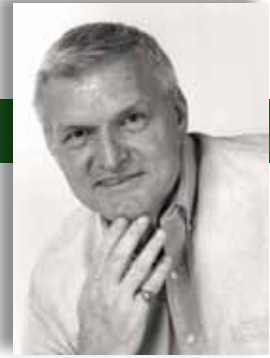
Marty Grimes



Ron Garten



Tony Bruno



Van Sintchak

association's monthly magazine, Ron Garten, CPS/Garten Corp., Irvine, California, says, "The magazine is very good. There are plenty of excellent articles and there always seems to be up-to-date and current information that we can put to use for our business. It's a real asset for the organization."

In addition to *Agency Sales*, Garten notes that the association provides a wealth of useful information around tax time concerning changes in the tax law. "It seems that whatever they provide, it's more than appropriate for what we're going through."

Manufacturer Referrals

Garten continues that another benefit of association membership remains "the referrals that we get from MANA from new principals who are looking for agents. I've had quite a few leads from MANA over the years."

Among other assets that he has made use of are the monthly teleforums on a variety of subjects, the personal service members receive from MANA staff, and the counseling available from a number of attorneys familiar with rep law. "In short, MANA remains a quality organization, and truly one of the best benefits we receive is the value we

get in return for our membership dues. I belong to other organizations and in comparison MANA is a real bargain."

High in his praise for MANA's suggested contracts with principals and sub-reps is Tony Bruno, Adhesive Brokers, Tustin, California. "I started in this business more than two decades ago," he says, "and over that period of time I can't measure the amount of time I've spent with lawyers working on contracts with principals and sub-reps. I recall one occasion where I must have spent in excess of \$7,000 to hammer out a principal contract and then we never even got off the ground with the principal. That's why the MANA-suggested contracts have been so valuable. I've used them with more than 20 principals over the years and still have about 12 in existence. What I usually do is present the suggested contract to the princi-

pal with the explanation that this is suggested by the association and this is the way many other reps operate. More times than not, there will be some modifications, but in general the contract works for us. About the only time I can recall where there might have been concern is when the principal has an attorney on staff and they've got to make their contribution to the discussion. I've found that once you get a contract in place, at least 95 percent of the time that establishes the foundation for your working relationship and then you hardly ever look at it again."

He emphasizes that "I maintain it's the same for the contract we've used with sub contractors. Once again, it's all about laying the foundation for working together, and then you're on your way."

Bruno also had high praise for MANA's efforts two years ago in its

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Ron Haynes



Ken McGregor

sponsorship of MANAfest. “In all my years in business, that was the best industry conference I ever took part in. The presentations, handouts, takeaways and opportunities to work with other reps were absolutely outstanding.”

“In general,” he continues, “MANA has given so much to us and to our membership that we all owe the association much in return.”


A Warm Reception

Van Sintchak, SSMarketing, Inc., Walnut Creek, California, has been in business for close to 35 years and a member of MANA for the last five. During that last half decade, he makes the point that “I haven’t really contacted MANA headquarters all that often, but it’s amazing that when I do, they recognize who I am and quickly answer my questions or offer a solution to a problem. You can just feel how they really desire to help!”

In addition to the easy access to MANA personnel that he enjoys, Sintchak values the special reports the association provides it membership and the notifications of lines that are available in the territory. And finally, there’s *Agency Sales*. “The articles are great and we read it religiously. Depending upon what’s happening in the business,

we always find something of value. The publication never fails to provide me with information and ideas and steers me to other sources to investigate trends.”

Staying with the theme of *Agency Sales*, Ron Haynes, CPMR, Rob Co., Inc., Carrollton, Texas, maintains the magazine is “a great read. Most of us read it on the fly and it never fails to provide us with a great business perspective from other agencies. It offers a terrific overview of the profession. I also enjoy thumbing through the issue looking for lines in the rep section.”

In addition to contract templates and negotiation guidelines, Ken McGregor, CPMR, McGregor & Associates, Inc., West Jordan, Utah, points to the advocacy with manufacturers that MANA provides its membership as a key value. “I think the most important thing that the association provides is a voice to the industry promoting the manufacturers’ rep concept and the fact that whatever the industry (plumbing, electrical, automotive, etc.) the issues are all universal.” McGregor, a past president of AIM/R, continues, “The services that MANA provides — if utilized — can be valuable tools for the reps to run their business and deal with their principals.” 

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