

MANA — A Wonderful Rep Resource

Recently, I was attending a MANA function with many other manufacturers' representatives and my peer group from various industries across the U.S. During the conference, we held an open forum Q&A and amongst the group were many single person agencies or simply rep agencies seeking advice or counsel. The discussion included topics like representative-principal contracts, succession planning, acquiring new lines, buy-sell agreements, marketing techniques and the many other areas we all face running a manufacturers' representative agency in today's environment.

As I sat and listened to the discussion and each rep's carefully thought-out reply, one common theme was apparent: the inference to MANA and the expertise, influence and foundational guidance provided to many of the reps in the room. My thoughts then turned to my own beginnings and where I leaned to obtain information that was not readily available, and I, like many others, turned to MANA.

MANA provides us with a community of like-minded individuals where we can share ideas and best practices to grow the profession. We are fortunate to be led by a seasoned CEO in Charley Cohon who, once a rep himself, understands the day-to-day issues and how best to resolve them. Charley and his staff speak frequently

with manufacturers who are looking to join MANA, so the insight they garner from these discussions is valuable to a representative to gain that proper perspective. Often, just a quick phone conversation to confirm a position is all that is needed.

Over the years, I have been contacted by manufacturers seeking representation in my region. Often, the conversation turns to how to find the "right" rep partner. As the conversation continues, more times than not the manufacturer has had multiple, lengthy conversations with the staff at MANA to best understand the rep perspective. The advice they receive makes for a more professional discussion and mutual understanding of each other's needs.



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MANA continually strives to be at the forefront of rep advancement, whether that be the design and implementation of the mobile app for manufacturers and representatives to connect with one another to educating principals on how to best work with reps. MANA also has many manufacturing members and it is great to exchange ideas and philosophies with them. I remember vividly having the opportunity to work closely with one such manufacturer and the insight I gained from his perspective has proved invaluable in my discussions even today.

MANA can offer the following: rep law, succession planning, LineFinder® (mobile App), valuable insightful articles in *Agency Sales* magazine, agency profiles established in the MANA website, MANAcast forums, and many more areas.

MANA exists to support the rep community and enhance the rep profession. Reach out, get involved, and use this “Wonderful Resource” we are all afforded as MANA members.



Tommy Garnett, CPMR, CSP, is president/CEO of Garnett Component Sales, Inc. GCS, headquartered in Wake Forest, NC, serves the OEM community by providing engineered mechanical component solutions. Garnett is a 31-year veteran of the manufacturers' representative business and small business owner.