



PTRA FOCUS

A publication of the Power-Motion
Technology Representatives Association

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THE CHANGING ROLE OF MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES IN AN AI-DRIVEN ECONOMY



As we approach the middle of the decade, the industrial marketplace continues to evolve under the influence of technology, shifting economic cycles, and global supply chain pressures. At the center of this transformation stand manufacturers' representatives, who play a unique role in connecting producers with end-users, bridging relationships, and guiding innovation into the marketplace.

One of the most significant forces shaping our business atmosphere today is artificial intelligence (AI). No longer just a buzzword, AI has become a practical tool in nearly every sector. For manufacturers' reps, AI impacts the business environment in several ways:

- **Market Insights & Forecasting:** AI-powered analytics can sift through vast amounts of data—from raw material costs to global demand patterns—helping reps anticipate market shifts and better advise both manufacturers and customers.
- **Customer Engagement:** Intelligent CRM platforms allow reps to personalize outreach, track client needs in real time, and even predict when a customer may be ready for the next purchase.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Automating tasks like quoting, order tracking, and reporting frees up reps to focus on building relationships, solving problems, and driving growth.
- **Global Connectivity:** AI-driven translation, virtual meeting tools, and supply chain monitoring enable reps to work more seamlessly across borders, opening doors to new opportunities.

At the same time, AI raises important challenges. Relationship-building—a core

strength of the rep model—cannot be replaced by algorithms. Instead, the future lies in blending human expertise with AI-driven insights. Successful reps will leverage these tools not as replacements, but as enhancements to their unique value proposition: trust, experience, and problem-solving.

Economically, we stand at an inflection point. Productivity gains from AI are beginning to show in manufacturing output and logistics efficiency, while uncertainty around interest rates, labor markets, and geopolitics continues to add complexity. In this environment, manufacturers' representatives remain critical interpreters—helping clients navigate not just products, but the business climate itself.

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, one truth remains clear: the rep's role is not diminished by AI, but rather redefined. Those who embrace new tools while staying rooted in relationships will be the ones who lead the way in this new industrial era.

That's why our upcoming conference in Puerto Rico carries the theme "**Riding the WAIVES of Change.**" The deliberate misspelling of waves highlights how AI ("A.I." in WAIVES) is both a disruption and an opportunity. Together, we'll explore how to navigate these changes, harness new tools, and strengthen the value of reps in a transforming industrial economy.

Puerto Rico • 2026 • **Riding the WAIVES of Change**



Royce Herring
PTRA President
2025-2026

ARE THOSE THE WAVES OF THE ATLANTIC CRASHING ON THE SHORES OF PUERTO RICO OR THE WAIVES OF CHANGE.

Let's see how we can Ride those WAIVES of Change into a profitable future ahead!!!



To kick off our keynotes this year, Simon Anderson will help us become "Future Ready™". Simon provides key insights into the trends and landscape that guide our world. With technology becoming increasingly more prevalent in the day-to-day sales climate for manufacturers and rep firms, this is sure to be a proactive approach to the changes we have in store for us. Let's open our minds to new techniques that better serve the emerging technology and help create a more resilient culture moving forward.

Next up will be Bryan Shirley leading a panel discussion focusing on the "Biggest Challenges" facing Manufacturing and Sales Representatives. Keep an eye out for a questionnaire coming to the PTRA membership to make sure the topics discussed are relevant. We all know how fast things have been changing so this will help frame the topics to be in real-time. With a mix of Manufacturers and Sales Representatives on the panel we will have a good blend of perspectives.

Breakout Sessions:

Our Breakout sessions will provide some small group engagement and deeper dive into topics.

- **John Mitchell** of Repfabric will be leading a discussion on Artificial Intelligence and its implications for the manufacturers and representatives' worlds.
- **Simon Anderson** will continue his insight to prepare you for the age of AI and the constant change of the future ahead.

- **Bryan Shirley** will be reprising his breakout session covering the "Buy/Sell" topic specifically for the Rep Organizations.

- **Ryan Rhoten** will round the breakouts with a session focusing on your "Distilled Brand" helping you with tools and techniques to grow your business and brand.

Of course, no PTRA Conference would be complete without the finale to help set the stage for the coming years! ITR economics own Taylor St. Germain will provide insight into the economic climate ahead. With technology and the ever-present Tariffs this will sure to be a very important look into how we can prepare for what's ahead and make sure we are making practical and profitable business decisions. ITR's forecasting ability has proven to be indispensable for businesses as we all prepare to confront economic uncertainty.

Immerse, Explore, Indulge!!!

Let's not forget that we will be in PUERTO RICO, the "Island of Enchantment". Have some fun, immerse yourself into the culture and make sure to take advantage of the guest programs we have planned.

Whether you are interested in the El Yunque National Forest, which is the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest System or walking the adoque paved streets of San Juan for a shopping excursion, there is much to explore.

There is no shortage of opportunity for indulgence within the Wyndham Grand Rio Mar resort, which is a destination within itself. Explore the multiple pools, bars, restaurants, beach front, golf courses or Casino. Paradise Awaits!

The Herring's look forward to hosting you all this coming spring at the PTRA 2026 Conference in Puerto Rico.



Ryan Van Damme
PTRA Conference Chair
2025-2026

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY: PTRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

Dear PTRA Partner,

I hope you're doing well. As President of PTRA, I want to personally invite your company to participate as a sponsor of the upcoming PTRA Annual Conference.

The PTRA Conference brings together manufacturers and manufacturers' representatives in the power transmission and motion control industry. It features:

- Interviews for new lines
- Meetings with current manufacturers/manufacturers' representatives
- Industry-leading speakers
- Business development and networking opportunities

This event plays a vital role in strengthening the rep-manufacturer partnership. Sponsorship helps support the cost of meals, activities, speakers, and programming – and allows us to continue delivering an outstanding event.

As a sponsor, your company will receive:

- Recognition throughout the conference
- Logo exposure in event materials
- Acknowledgment during sessions and meals
- Increased visibility among manufacturers' reps and industry leaders

We deeply value the partnership between PTRA and our sponsors, and your support has a direct impact on the success of our members and the industry.

This year we have selected packages you can choose from or ala-cart options as in the past.

Please check out our website for more details: www.ptra.org

Regards,
Royce Herring – PTRA President

REPFABRIC PRESENTING AT THE PTRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

We are excited to be attending the upcoming PTRA Annual Meeting!



Repfabric is proud to have the opportunity to present and hold a training/informational session on Sunday, May 3 from 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm. All presentations will focus on the latest features of Repfabric's software and how they help sales representatives increase their productivity, efficiency, and visibility across every line they represent.

We'll showcase new capabilities like enhanced Mobile functionality, streamlined Email & Calendar Sync, and collaborative dashboards for manufacturer reporting, all designed to help agencies work smarter, sell faster, and strengthen relationships.

There will be 3 unique topics covered in the sessions, so whether you're a current Repfabric customer or just want to learn more, there will be something for everyone.

Be on the lookout for more details, but a quick summary is below:

- The first topic is for Manufacturers and Reps who want to understand how Repfabric's modular platform and the AI enhancements on the mobile and web interface. Sharing how AI can cutdown

on the administrative tasks throughout the day.

- The second topic is for Owners, Managers, and Sales Leaders who want to learn best practices for driving technology adoption, improving onboarding, and integrating Repfabric with tools like Power BI and CPQ systems to future-proof their operations.

- The third topic is for Agencies and Principals who want to build stronger, data-driven relationships using Repfabric's dashboards and AI-powered insights. You'll learn how to share performance data securely, highlight line performance, and collaborate more effectively with manufacturers.

Repfabric will also be a part of the breakout sessions, where we'll explore Artificial Intelligence and its impact on the manufacturer and representative ecosystem, including how AI can accelerate sales planning, reporting, and customer engagement. If you would like to learn more about Repfabric or our other platforms for Distributors and Manufacturers, please visit: www.repfabric.com, www.distifabric.com, www.manufabric.com

MARKETING TASK FORCE

The Marketing Task Force is focused on keeping members connected and informed year-round. We're expanding our LinkedIn presence, highlighting new members, and refreshing PTRA materials. We're also introducing quick member surveys and "What's New @ PTRA" highlights at the conference this year to make it more interactive and engaging.

MEMBERSHIP TASK FORCE

The Membership Task Force, over the last year, has been working on several fronts towards its responsibilities and initiatives. The following are some highlights of what we have been working on:

Lapsed Membership Follow-Up

With annual PTRA memberships coming due in the summer, there are always some who haven't renewed their memberships. Often, it is needed for us to contact the lapsed members personally to not only remind them of their lapsed membership, but in some cases, investigate why they are leaving the organization.

Spotlight Profile

We coordinate to provide Member Spotlight Profiles to be included with the PTRA newsletter to give a

general perspective from a new or long-standing member on belonging to PTRA.

Member Benefits: The task force is reviewing new benefits for members. We are investigating promotional item vendors for members to have discount options. This initiative would allow PTRA members to order smaller quantity orders for their respective companies at bulk order pricing.

Strategic Initiatives: We have developed new Strategic Initiatives as a team to serve our existing members better and attract new ones. One of our main goals is to make PTRA welcoming to our first-time conference attendees, while continuing to offer a beneficial experience for existing members.

EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The PTRA Education Taskforce is excited to welcome Kati McDermith with Industry Select as a new associate member. Kati recently led our first webinar with PTRA members, introducing Industry Select as a leading resource for industrial data, sales, and prospecting. We look forward to scheduling another session with Kati soon—stay tuned for details! Our sincere thanks to Kati for hosting the first Industry Select webinar of the year and to all attendees for making it an outstanding success.

Our commitment to education continues to thrive through engaging partner spotlights and informative tech tips featured in each monthly PTRA newsletter. We gratefully acknowledge our longtime partner, Turner Time Management, whose consistent dedication provides our members with invaluable

technical insights that enhance knowledge, support growth, and strengthen our industry community.

As we prepare for 2026, we're eager to strengthen our partnerships with AD, MERF, MANA, Turner Time, and Repfabric to deliver meaningful and accessible learning opportunities. At the same time, we're exploring advanced e-learning platforms that will allow us to personalize and enhance the educational experience for every member.

The new year promises exciting possibilities, and the PTRA Education Taskforce remains dedicated to delivering impactful webinars, insightful content, and innovative learning experiences for our members.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ANTICIPATING CHANGES IN BUSINESS DIRECTION

INSIGHTS FROM ITR ECONOMICS

For decision-makers running businesses, the ability to navigate market complexities and anticipate coming changes is an advantage that can propel your organization ahead of the pack. This business cycle will present opportunities as the industrial sector makes moderate gains, but it is important to note that input costs are also expected to rise. This presents the risk of profitless prosperity, a situation where margin expansion struggles to keep pace with top-line growth.

To prepare for this, business leaders should identify vertical markets poised for the most growth, allocate resources to those markets to gain share, deemphasize less profitable products or service offerings, and invest in productivity improvements ahead of a period likely to be characterized by higher labor costs.

ITR Economics has a long and favorable track record for “seeing the future first,” providing invaluable insights that help business leaders both anticipate and prepare for market shifts while reducing risk. By leveraging the insights offered by ITR Economics and preparing for anticipated changes in direction, business leaders can ensure that their organizations remain resilient and thrive in the ever-evolving market landscape.



Taylor St. Germain
ITR Economics

BEYOND RESILIENT: HOW TO BE FUTURE READY™ IN AN AGE OF AI AND CONSTANT CHANGE

Resilience means bouncing back. But what if you could spot emerging opportunities while there's still time to act on them? Leaders can't predict the future, but they can prepare for it. Simon reveals the Future-Ready Formula™- a clear three-step framework (Attention, Anticipation, Action) to explore emerging possibilities and turn uncertainty into competitive advantage. Discover proven techniques for strategic unlearning, five immediate action steps you can implement right away, and how to develop a “beyond resilient” mindset that keeps you ahead of change.



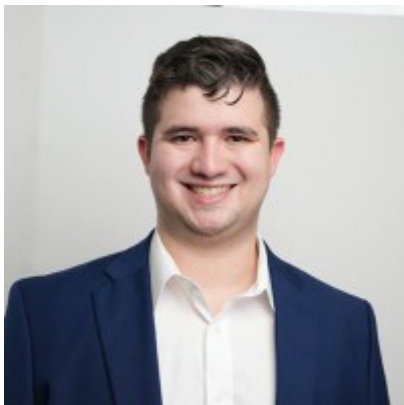
Simon Anderson
PTR A 54th Annual Conference
Keynote Speaker

NEW PTRA ASSOCIATE MEMBER BBB TECHS



PTRA is excited to welcome BBB Techs as a new resource for our members. At BBB Techs, we believe rep agencies deserve tools that make their businesses more efficient, more visible, and more profitable. Our focus is on helping agencies work smarter, not harder – so you can spend less time wrestling with systems and more time building manufacturer and customer relationships.

Learn more at www.bbbtechs.com and discover how BBB Techs can support your growth.



Tim Blake, a dynamic young CEO, is dedicated to driving business transformation through data-driven insights. With expertise in the Microsoft 365 universe, he emphasizes that technology adoption alone is insufficient; true success comes from empowering teams to extract meaningful insights and drive innovation.

As a Subject Matter Expert for Microsoft Office 365, Tim collaborates with Fortune 100 companies like Blackstone, JnJ, and Mastercard. He facilitates the Office 365 Customer Immersion Experience program, engaging with key decision-makers and conducting global training sessions.

Beyond his role, Tim is committed to maximizing profits and unleashing business insights. Passionate about driving change through technology, he shares expertise in Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive, Office, Skype for Business, and Power BI, aiming to empower organizations for innovative and sustainable success.

KRAMER'S KORNER

BARBARA H. KRAMER, ESQ.

As we look toward the Annual Conference, I encourage PTRA members to look at the role of the association and what it can do for you as an Independent Sales Representative. As the name reflects, the Power Motion-Technology Representative's Association is, first and foremost, an association for sales representatives.

Under the PTRA Bylaws, all voting Members must be Independent Sales Representatives: businesses that solicit and promote the sale of products or services for manufacturers and distributors and are paid by commission. Manufacturers that attend the Annual Conference play an important role in your business and at the conference, but they are not voting members of PTRA.

The value of the Association and the Annual Conference includes the chance to connect with other businesses, to gain skills, to strengthen relationships with colleagues in the same industries, to meet and connect with your existing principals, and to potentially identify new principals.

This year, I encourage PTRA's Members – the sales representatives—to also use the Conference and Association to strengthen the foundation of your businesses by thinking about your contracts. Many of you have heard me say that, as a commissioned sales agency, your contracts are your most valuable asset. Your agreements with your principals dictate:

- When you are paid commissions;
- How much commission you are paid;
- When those commissions may be changed;
- The scope of your exclusivity;
- When you may be terminated;
- When and if your sales force may be poached;
- What types of competitive products you may sell while the agreement is in effect and after it is terminated; and
 - How much protection you have if you are sued because of an injury caused by one of your manufacturer's products

Those who doubt the importance of these rep agreements need only look to the efforts that manufacturers are taking to tighten them up. Manufacturers are preparing longer, tighter agreements to protect their own interests. These agreements are drafted by lawyers to give the manufacturers as much flexibility as possible to change commissions, reduce territory, add house accounts, and terminate sales reps. These agreements are not written to be fair; they are written to protect the manufacturer from you.

From a business perspective, your interests and those of your manufacturers should be aligned. You both want to sell as much product as possible. One enlightened CFO of a manufacturer said that

a commission check is the best check to write—the more they sold the bigger the check. But not every manufacturer thinks that way. Many, looking for quick ways to save money, try to cut commissions, effectively penalizing reps for their successes. While business interests of reps and principals should be the same, their legal interests are not; from a legal perspective, the interests of the manufacturer and the sales representative are adverse to each other.

In order to protect your business, you should always be thinking about how to use your rep agreements to increase the overall value of your business and your long-term interests. Protecting your business

against arbitrary commission cuts and termination is good for you and good for your manufacturers. If you have security, you are better positioned to invest in your business and your sales force.

The Annual Conference offers an opportunity for reps to talk about ways in which they can protect and increase the value of their businesses. This year, one breakout session just for reps will be focused on these issues, talking about contracts and business issues entirely from the sales rep perspective. I encourage you to attend and to bring your experience and business savvy to help your own business and all the Members of your organization.

KRAMER'S KORNER

BARBARA H. KRAMER, ESQ.
KRAMER & KRAMER, LLP, PTRALegal COUNSEL
734-821-1055

Have a legal question, concern or need some legal advice? PTRALegal counsel, Barbara Kramer, is looking to YOU for questions to answer! If you have a burning legal question please send them to ptrahq@ptra.org.

We will keep a list of these on file for legal counsel to answer in an effort to provide more relevant content in our monthly member communications.

Don't be shy about submitting your questions and they can remain anonymous if requested.

Member

Get A Member

Campaign

Don't forget about Member Get A Member program! If you believe your membership in PTRA is worthwhile, then you almost certainly know some fellow reps in our industry that are not members who would benefit just like you from membership. Wouldn't you be doing them a favor by recommending they join, and attend our national conference in April?

Let's take this a step further. Are some of your principals PTRA members? Do they and you not also benefit from their membership?

The bottom line is that your membership could be of even more value to you if we had more reps and more good principals as members. Well, we're going to ask you to help us grow, for your benefit and for the benefit of all PTRA members... and we're going to

make it worthwhile!

Here's the deal: For every new principal or rep member you recruit who also attends the upcoming PTRA Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX, you will receive a year of free dues.

Here's How it Works:

1. Have the new member download a membership application from the PTRA Website or join online through via www.ptra.org. They must list you as the sponsor on the application.
2. When you have confirmed that they have joined and registered for the upcoming 54th Annual Conference, email us at ptrahq@ptra.org. We'll send you a thank you and confirm your \$450 credit for your membership dues!

PTRA MENTORING PROGRAM

If you are new to the industry or just started a rep business and are simply looking for a little guidance or advise, PTRA has a mentoring program that is here to help you! If you are interested, reach out to the PTRA office at ptrahq@ptra.org, and we will work with leadership to pair you with a seasoned veteran outside of your geographic area.

These mentors can also help with things such as:

- Negotiating commissions
- Employees pay structure
- Contract suggestions and guidance
- CRM and sales software recommendations
- Payroll software recommendations
- Profit line analysis
- And so much more!

LINES LINES AVAILABLE

(Listed in alphabetical order as of October 21, 2025)

GearKo Drive Technology Limited

Alabama | **Phone:** 852 69133968 | **Email:** roger@gearkoreducer.com

Contact: Roger Wang

Product Description: Precision planetary gearbox, Strain wave gearbox, Rack & pinion, Delta robot

Target markets: Entire USA

Royersford Foundry & Machine Co., Inc.

Royersford, PA | **Phone:** 610-935-7200 | **ndeisher@royersford.com**

Contact: Nicky Deisher

Territories Open: CT, ME, MA, MN, ND, NE, NH, NY*, RI, SD, VT, NY* - *Excluding Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, Staten Island, and Long Island*

Product Description: Babbitt and Bronze Pillow Blocks, Couplings, Collars, Commercial Roller Bearings, Arbor Presses, Tapered Roller Bearings, Spherical Roller Bearings, and special made-to-order components in extended sizes, various housing and insert styles and materials, and custom tooling.

Target markets: We serve a wide range of industrial sectors including Mining & Aggregate, Steel & Metals Processing, Pulp & Paper, Marine & Dredging, Concrete, Construction Equipment, Agriculture, Food Manufacturing, Material Handling, Waste Water Treatment, and General Manufacturing.

Siti Power Transmission

Littleton, MA | **Phone:** 978-339-4500 | **kent.lyons@sitipowertransmission.com**

Contact: Kent Lyons

Territories Open: AL, AK, AZ, CA (south), CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, HI, KS, ME, MA, MS, MO, NV, NH, NY (north), RI, TN (west), UT, VT, WY

International Territories: MX, PR, VI

Product Description: Worm Gearboxes, Helical Bevel, Planetary, Mechanical Variable Speed

Target markets: Conveyors, Packaging Equipment, Pumps, General Processing

NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming the following new PTRA members!

New Principal Members

Gearko

info@gearkoreducer.com

www.gearkoreducer.com

Atlantic Gear Works, Inc.

jconway@atlantagear.com

www.AtlantaGear.com

New Associate Members

MNI

kmcdermith@mni.net

www.mni.net

Brown, Barber & Blake LLC

Tblake@bbbtechs.com

Bbbtechs.com

2025 - 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS LISTING

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TASK FORCE LEADERSHIP

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Pro-Power Associates
Eden, New York

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Logan Adams
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Taylor Industrial Sales Co.
Crossville, TN

Education: Chair

Ben Taylor
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Taylor Industrial Sales Co
Tampa, FL

Marketing: Chair

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Royersford Foundry & Machine
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Royersford, PA

Rep/Principal: Chair

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Solon, OH



PTRA

