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JANUARY 2019

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VOICE OF ELECTRICAL
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The Modern Sales Ninja

How combining ancient techniques with new technologies can make sales calls more effective — and help make everybody more money. Read more on pg. 14



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Jesse H. Neal Editorial
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1966, 1973, 1975,
1981, 1985

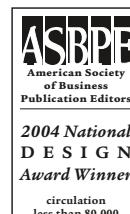
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Certificate of Merit
1960, 1961 (First Award),
1976, 1993, 1996 (2)



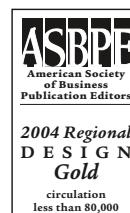
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under 80,000



2004 National
DESIGN
Award Winner
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**COMING
SPRING 2019**

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Sales Tips that Still Matter

An ace salesperson can sometimes sell you some good life lessons.

We all have to do some selling in our lives, even if we don't have to meet monthly sales budgets. In many business situations, we sometimes have to "sell" our own credibility and competence. In new social situations, we may have to sell our potential as an enjoyable companion.

When I was quite young I actually did make a few sales. I won a YMCA gym bag for selling a carton of thin mints in a fundraiser, and for selling two subscriptions to New Jersey's *Ridgewood News*, I got a 75-cent bleacher ticket to see the New York Yankees play.

These days, I leave the hard sales to the fine sales force we have selling print and digital ads for *EW* so the editorial staff and I can focus on creating the content for this magazine, like this month's package of articles on the changes in electrical sales. But some classic sales tips I learned over the years still apply in today's ever-more digital world. Below are several of them.

Remember the little things. I was always amazed how Tom Preston, one of the industry's true legends, always remembered the names of someone's wife, husband, their children, as well as their hobbies, etc. I discovered the method to his magic when he once asked to fetch a card from his Rolodex file. I was amazed to see how many notes he had scrawled on the cards of various contacts — birthdays, family names, you name it. This was the pre-computer age, but to this day it's the best contact database I have ever seen.

Keep replenishing your industry contacts. Retirements, layoffs and job changes constantly chip away at our circle of contacts. There's no better way to rebuild them than to make the most of the networking opportunities at industry events. We have all been at a trade show or conference where we are dog-tired and just want to get back to



By Jim Lucy, Content Director

the hotel room and put our feet up. Don't give in. I can't tell you how many times I made a new contact because I made the extra effort to stop by a few more booths at a trade show or circulated around the room at a cocktail party just a little longer. And when I do, I always thank Tom Preston, who always worked a reception by walking the room clockwise and counter-clockwise, just in case he missed someone.

A positive attitude goes a long way. I never met someone in this industry who enjoyed his sales career as much as Bob Finley, who after retiring as Glasco Electric's president, wrote for *EW* for more than 20 years on what it takes to sell electrical products. If you ever met Bob, you could feel his positive energy the moment he walked into a room. "I am so glad that I had the privilege of spending my entire career in sales," Finley wrote in one of his *EW* articles. "I can't think of anything I would have rather been. Being a salesperson fit me like a glove on my hand."

Never forget WIFM. The late Jim Newton used to joke that he knew it was time to retire from his family business,

Oakes Electric Supply in Holyoke, MA, and try something else, when he got to work one day and found his desk moved out into the parking lot. That something else turned out to be Sales Tech, a training company that taught a generation of electrical salespeople about the importance of "WIFM"—"What's in it for me?" Newton used to say everyone has their own WIFM and that the trick was to figure out how to service that need. In one of the many articles he wrote for *EW*, he said, "Whether the guy is the purchasing agent, treasurer or chief electrical engineer, he still wants to do better. You have to figure out how to present what your company is offering in ways that makes them think, 'This would be good for me.'"

Go the extra mile. A shoeshine guy at Grand Central Terminal once told me he got a job just because he helped an office receptionist set up a Christmas tree. "I was a delivery guy, and I used to be friendly with this receptionist in an office building," he said. "If I had time between deliveries I would help her with some of her stuff, moving boxes, opening mail, whatever. One time I was helping her put up some Christmas decorations in the lobby, and the boss came in. He said, 'You don't even work here, but you are helping my company. That's the kind of employee I want.' He hired me on the spot for a nice job."

These tips from some of the best salespeople I ever met always work for me and I hope they help you, too. ■



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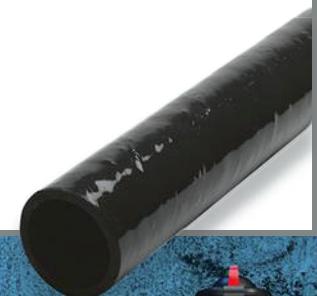
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Van Meter Sells Chicago Branch to Connexion

Van Meter Inc. is selling its Chicago location, formerly Bright Electric, which the Iowa-based distributor acquired in 2016, to Connexion, a Chicago-based electrical distributor. The operation will become Connexion's fourth stocking location in the greater Chicago market. The purchase was expected to be completed by Dec. 28.

David Rosenstein, Connexion's president and CEO, said in a release, "Our desire for a larger footprint in Chicago timed well with Van Meter's shift in focus. We're adding a prime location and excellent team to our growing business."

The Bright acquisition was Van Meter's first foray into the Chicago market, providing it a one-location footprint with a strong lighting presence in a competitive market.

"As we evaluate and prioritize strategic investments in various markets and customer segments, we need to align our resources and investments to the opportunities that best support our growth objectives," said Lura McBride, president and CEO of Van Meter. "Our 2025 road map specifically includes expanding our expertise in high-tech automation solutions and services, growing our national contractor business, investing in e-commerce, and evaluating multi-

location acquisition opportunities."

Connexion has been serving the Chicago market since 2007 and the new branch joins existing stocking locations in Buffalo Grove, Evanston and Chicago's Medical District, along with sales offices in downtown Chicago and Lockport, IL.

"We are focused on continuing to develop our specialty lighting business, which includes the design/build, renovation, MRO, and national account markets," Rosenstein said in the release. "The book of business Van Meter has built in that space is a perfect fit for our growth strategy."

Connexion said it hopes to retain many of Van Meter's employees and has hired Josh Patton, who formerly worked for Van Meter in Iowa and Chicago, as general manager.

Both Connexion and Van Meter are members of Affiliated Distributors (AD) buying and marketing group. "We feel good knowing the business will stay within the AD network," McBride said. "I'm confident our people, customers and suppliers in Chicago will thrive as part of the Connexion organization."

Van Meter is ranked #25 on *EW's* 2018 Top 200 ranking and Connexion is ranked #85.

HOUSING MARKETS SHOW SIGNS OF A SLOWDOWN

Even for electrical distributors, manufacturers and reps who don't do much work in the residential market, the health of the housing industry is an important leading economic indicator to watch.

When folks are buying houses, it creates demand for countless other industries that sell products for new homes, including furniture stores, home centers, mortgage companies and garden centers. And while the residential market accounts for an estimated 15% to 20% of total electrical sales for electrical distributors overall, it also has a sizeable impact on the commercial construction market, because new homebuyers create demand for new stores, medical buildings, restaurants, movie theaters, and many other service providers, as well as schools and hospitals.

After a strong run over the past few years, the housing market has hit some turbulence. Rising interest rates, concerns over housing prices, and an increase in housing inventory have squeezed consumer demand.

There's been some noticeable softening in the single-family permit data in some major markets that had previously been very active, including Seattle (-9.6% year-over-year, through Oct. 2018); Fort Collins, CO (-18.6% over that same period); and Myrtle Beach, SC (-10.4%). Some perennial hot spots are still sizzling, with the following markets up double-digits: Phoenix, AZ; Austin and Hous-

ton, TX; all major markets in Colorado with the exception of Fort Collins; and most major markets in the Sunshine State, including Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, and Ft. Myers-Cape Coral.

Another indicator pointing downward is contract signings for new homes. According to the National Association of Realtors, year-over-year (YOY) contract signings dropped -6.7% in October, the tenth straight month of YOY decreases. Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, said in the release that one cause for the decline in housing sales is that the recent rise in mortgage rates have reduced the pool of eligible homebuyers.

He would like to see the Federal Reserve stop raising rates. "The inflationary pressure is all but disappearing," Yun said in the press release. "Given that condition, there is less of a need to aggressively raise interest rates. Looking at the broader economy and keeping in mind that the housing sector is a great contributor to the economy, it would be wise for the Federal Reserve to slow the raising of rates to see how inflation develops."

Yun expects existing-home sales this year to decrease -3.1% to 5.34 million, and for the national median existing-home price to increase +4.7%. He expects existing sales to decline 0.4% in 2019 and for home prices to drop roughly -2.5% next year.

Fromm Electric Supply Signs On with Signify

Fromm Electric Supply, Reading, PA, has entered into a strategic partnership with Philips Lighting (rebranded in May to Signify) for the supply of lamps, ballasts and LED drivers. Fromm was previously aligned with Sylvania for these products.

According to officials at Fromm, this decision was reached after two years of careful evaluation, and considered factors including Signify's track record and continued commitment to innovation in product development. Fromm CEO Michael Fromm said in a press release, "Our obligation to customers is to be responsive to evolving needs, trends and technology advancements in the industrial, commercial and residential market segments that will forever change the configuration of lighting systems."

Fromm added that since many facilities are still dependent on traditional lighting products, he is confident that Signify will continue to support these technologies.

Residential Rooftop Solar Rule Approved by California Board

California's Building Standards Commission gave final approval to a new rule requiring solar panels on new homes, the first of its kind in the United States. Set to take effect in 2020, the new standard includes an exemption for houses that are often shaded from the sun, according to a recent report by National Public Radio. It also includes incentives for battery storage.

Regal Beloit Sells Drives and Control Systems Business

Regal Beloit Corp., Beloit, WI, has agreed to sell its engineered drives and control systems business to an affiliate of Sun Capital Partners Inc. The business is expected to generate \$131 million in revenues this year and has 450 employees.

The business consists of two groups. The engineered drives business, founded in 1967, develops and manufactures variable frequency drive systems and other motor control solutions, with a focus on application-specific, highly engineered products.

The control systems business, founded in 1983, designs and assembles an extensive line of low and medium voltage starters, variable frequency drive systems and other motor control products serving critical applications within harsh environments.

"We see enormous potential in these businesses, and will provide the support and resources needed to grow them into a successful, stand-alone company," said Marc Leder, Co-CEO of Sun Capital Partners.

NEWS BRIEFS

Horizon Solutions to Acquire Maine's N. H. Bragg

Horizon Solutions Rochester, NY, has signed an agreement to purchase New England-based, privately-held N. H. Bragg. Founded in 1854 as a supplier to blacksmiths, N. H. Bragg serves large and small businesses across Maine, New Hampshire and northeastern Massachusetts, including paper mills, machine shops, construction sites and shipyards. The company is headquartered in Bangor, ME, and has branches in Scarborough, ME, and Tewksbury, MA. With approximately 60 employees, N. H. Bragg provides industrial and safety supplies to over 4,000 customers across New England. The transaction is scheduled to close on Jan. 1.

Horizon Solutions President and CEO John Kerkhove said in the press release, "Under Horizon Solutions ownership, N. H. Bragg will continue to operate under the N.H. Bragg name with the same employees, suppliers and customers. N. H. Bragg President Jon Eames will serve as vice president of the Industrial and Safety Supply Division across the Horizon Solutions footprint."

GE to Launch Stand-Alone Industrial IoT Software Biz

General Electric, Boston, announced plans to combine its industrial Internet of things (IIoT) software portfolio into a new, independent company. The company will bring together GE Digital's IIoT solutions including the Predix platform, Asset Performance Management, Historian, Automation (HMI/SCADA), Manufacturing Execution Systems, Operations Performance Management, and the GE Power Digital and Grid Software Solutions businesses in a comprehensive IIoT offering that will start with \$1.2 billion in annual revenue and an existing global industrial customer base.

GE said its new IIoT business would provide software for asset intensive industries with a focus on the power, renewables, aviation, oil and gas, food and beverage, chemicals, consumer packaged goods and mining industries.

The company is expected to be a GE wholly-owned, independently run business with a new brand and identity, its own equity structure, and its own board of directors, said a GE release.

electrostats

VITAL STATISTICS

CONSTRUCTION

New Construction Put-in-Place (\$ billions, SAAR)

	Oct '18 ¹	Sep '18 ²	Mo. % Change	Oct '17	YTY % Change
Total Construction	1,308.80	1,310.8	-0.1	1,247.50	4.9
Total Private Construction₁	998.7	1,003.0	-0.4	961.6	3.9
Residential	539	541.7	-0.5	529.5	1.8
New single family	282.6	284.2	-0.5	275.9	2.4
New multi-family	62	61.4	1	60.1	3.2
Nonresidential	459.7	461.3	-0.3	432.1	6.4
Lodging	32.9	32.4	1.6	28	17.7
Office	66.4	64.5	3.1	57.1	16.3
Commercial	84.7	85.3	-0.6	84.2	0.6
Health care	32.9	33.2	-0.9	33.1	-0.7
Educational	22	21.8	0.7	20.3	8.2
Religious	2.9	2.9	2	3.3	-9.6
Amusement and recreation	15	15.3	-1.6	13.9	7.6
Transportation	17.5	17.7	-0.9	16.3	7.8
Communication	23.7	23.7	-0.3	24.9	-5
Power	93.6	95.9	-2.4	85.6	9.4
Electric	70.5	72.5	-2.9	65.8	7.1
Manufacturing	66.8	67.4	-1	64.8	3.1
Public Construction (\$ billions)₂	310.2	307.8	0.8	285.9	8.5
Residential	6.1	6	2	6.4	-4.8
Nonresidential	304	301.9	0.7	279.5	8.8
Office	9.6	9.1	5.4	9.1	5.1
Commercial	4	3.6	9.5	3.1	26.4
Health care	9.5	9.2	3	9.7	-1.8
Educational	76.9	75	2.6	70.4	9.2
Public safety	9.4	9.1	3.6	8.6	10
Amusement and recreation	12.9	12.7	1.7	10	28.2
Transportation	35.9	36.3	-1.1	31.2	15
Power	5.7	5.6	1.8	5.8	-1.8
Highway and street	94.6	94.6	-0.1	89.9	5.2
Sewage and waste disposal	21.7	21.9	-0.8	20.5	5.7
Water supply	13.9	13.8	0.8	11.4	22.2
Conservation and development	8.1	8.8	-8.6	8.1	0.3
Housing Starts (SAAR)	Mon '18¹	Mon '18²	Mo. % Change	Mon '17	YTY % Change
Total (thousands of units)	1,201	1,268	-5.3%	1,158	3.7%
Single-family (thousands of units)	871	879	-0.9%	831	4.8%
Multi-family (thousands)	324	372	-12.9%	310	4.5%

EMPLOYMENT WAGE & PRICE STATISTICS

	Mo.	Latest Month	Mo. % Change	Year ago	YTY % Change
Employment, Electrical Contractors (thousands)₄	OCT	950.4	0.7	914.4	3.9
Hourly wage, Electrical Contractors (\$)₄	OCT	31.63	-0.2	30.61	3.3
Copper prices (cents per pound)	NOV	275.07	(0.6)	309.96	-11.3

INDUSTRIAL MARKET

	Mo.	Latest Month	Mo. % Change	Year ago	YTY % Change
Electrical Mfrs' Shipments (\$ millions)	OCT	3,090	-3.1	2,825	4.8
Electrical Mfrs' Inventories (\$ millions SA)₂	OCT	5,333	0.3	4,860	9.3
Electrical Mfrs' Inventory-to-Shipment ratio	OCT	1.670	0.3	NA	NA
Electrical Mfrs' New Orders (\$ millions SA)₂	OCT	3,111	0.2	3,054	1.9
Machine Tool Orders (\$ millions)	SEP	592.08	48.1	393.66	50.4
Industrial Capacity Utilization (percent, SA)	OCT	76.20	0.1 pts.	75.20	1.0 pts.
Purchasing Managers Index (percent)	NOV	59.3	1.6 pts.	58.2	1.1 pts.

Footnotes: 1 - preliminary; 2 - revised; 3 - includes residential improvements; Z - less than 0.005 percent; SA - seasonally adjusted; SAAR - seasonally adjusted annual rate. **Sources:** Construction Put-in-Place statistics - Department of Commerce; Housing starts - Department of Commerce's Census Bureau; Electrical contractor employment numbers and hourly wage - Department of Labor; Copper prices - Metals Week; Electrical manufacturers' shipment data - Department of Commerce; Machine Tool Orders - Association for Manufacturing Technology; Industrial Capacity Utilization - Federal Reserve Board; and Purchasing Managers Index - Institute for Supply Management.

Note: Additional economic data relevant to the electrical industry is available on a bi-weekly basis by subscribing to Electrical Marketing newsletter. For subscription information see www.electricalmarketing.com.

EBCI CURRENT CONDITIONS INDEX DROPS AGAIN

For the second time in three months, the current conditions component of the EBCI has dropped below 50, giving up more than 13 points from last month to a reading of 36.7 in November. This marks the lowest point in the series since August 2012.

The ElectroIndustry Business Conditions Index (EBCI) is a monthly survey of senior executives at electrical manufacturers published by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), Rosslyn, VA. Any score over the 50-point level indicates a greater number of panelists see conditions improving than see them deteriorating.

Although the share of executives at electrical manufacturers who answered the survey reported worse conditions increased to 33%, a solid majority — 60% — noted unchanged conditions. The mix of responses is perhaps more telling than the headline number, likely signaling that the extent to which conditions are improving compared to the prior period may have peaked.

By contrast, the future conditions component just barely returned to expansionary territory following a three-month string of sub-50 readings. With responses about expectations for six months ahead split evenly between better, worse, and unchanged, the November score calculated to exactly 50 points.

Panel members' comments showed some ambivalence, along with a nod to continued strength in the industrial sector and some concerns about trade and inflationary pressures in the months ahead.

In the Private Construction category in the chart, office construction, one of the larger categories in the Value of New Construction data published monthly by the U.S. Census Bureau, showed a +16.3% increase over Oct. 2017 to \$66.4 billion. In Public Construction, the educational category is also doing well, with a +9.2% increase year-over-year to \$76.9 billion. ■

Editor's Note. We had to get the January issue to the printer early because of the holidays, and updated data for some of our Vital Statistics was not available at press-time.



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An LED Retrofit for Brandeis University

Energy Source, a division of Revolution Lighting Technologies, Providence, RI, sent some photos and details of its recently completed LED retrofit project for Brandeis University, a private university in Waltham, MA. The company retrofitted lighting systems at the university's 65,000-square-foot Carl and Ruth Shapiro Campus Center, home to study spaces, theater, libraries, café, lounges, bookstore, and student life offices. The project was a continuation of Energy Source's work as a program contractor within the Eversource Commercial & Industrial (C&I) retrofit program.

The project began with a comprehensive assessment by Energy Source and then replacement of some of the existing antiquated lighting with LED solutions throughout the facility. The retrofit is expected to reduce Brandeis' annual lighting costs by 78% while delivering superior light output to ensure a highly productive environment for students and faculty, the company said.

Energy Source managed every phase of the project, providing turnkey services that included scope development, material selection, incentive procurement, and project management. They also worked to secure project incentives that will help



Brandeis University secure a payback of under five years.

"We were able to vastly improve the quality of light by switching over to LEDs. Areas that were under-lit before are now bright and welcoming while using less energy," said Mary Fischer, manager of Sustainability Programs, Brandeis University. "We were able to replace some of the old fixtures with half as many LED fixtures due to their increased lumen output per fixture. The LEDs will last longer, reducing the need for costly replacements in that problem area."

The Eversource C&I retrofit program supports the state's Mass Save program and helps to maintain Massachusetts' #1 state ranking for energy efficiency, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE). In partnership with Eversource, Energy Source helps businesses prioritize ways to reduce energy and costs by identifying and implementing cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities, including lighting, controls, HVAC and motor upgrades, refrigeration controls, and other measures to reduce both electric and gas consumption.

GROTE INDUSTRIES NAMES SOUTHWIRE CANADA SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

Vehicle lighting and safety systems manufacturer Grote Industries, Toronto, ON, named Southwire Canada (SWC) its Supplier of the Year for boosting its supply chain performance, which helped Grote Industries grow sales and improve the operational efficiency of its manufacturing processes.

SWC has been Grote's strategic partner for 29 years, providing a number of wiring solutions for the company's advanced products in vehicle, trailer, and battery cables.

"SWC really listened to our needs as a customer," said Kirk Batten, controller for Grote Industries. "They demonstrated leadership and genuine interest in partnering with Grote. They have dramatically improved their level of service for all aspects of our business."

In reworking Grote's service model, Southwire introduced an enhanced Customer Experience strategy to improve overall service and product delivery, which improved reporting and communication throughout the manufacturing and product delivery cycle to support Grote's production and sales goals, Grote said in a press release. The new resource alignment led to improved accuracy in supply chain forecasts and dramatically improved its On Time In Full (OTIF) delivery metrics.

"We are thrilled to be recognized by Grote Industries for our efforts to be Canada's number one supplier for electrical wire and cable," said Maureen Russolo, VP, Customer Experience. "We look forward to building on recent momentum to create a stronger, more reliable supply chain for both companies."

NEMA Reworks A-line Shipments Index as LEDs Take Over

LEDs continue to take over the market for A-line lamps, according to the latest report on lamp shipments from the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), Rosslyn, VA.

LED A-line lamp shipments increased 27% in the third quarter of 2018 compared to 2Q 2018 and leapt 30.6% compared to 3Q 2017. Halogen A-line lamps posted a small increase in shipments in 3Q 2018 compared to the previous quarter (1.7%), but lost ground compared to the same quarter a year ago, down 16.8%. Compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) A-line shipments lost even more ground, slipping 2.3% compared to 2Q 2018 and 17.3% from 3Q 2017 levels.

LED A-line lamps now account for 65.1% of the consumer lamp market, followed by halogen A-line lamps at 28.1% and CFLs holding the remaining 6.7% share, NEMA reported.

NEMA has reworked its A-line lamp reports to incorporate newly available A-line LED data, the association said last month.

When the A-line Lamp Index was first developed and published in 2012, it was designed to measure the shift in general-service (A-line) lamp technology as a result of the implementation of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA-2007), which required manufacturers to replace traditional incandescent lamp technology with halogen incandescent lamp technology that consumed 28% less energy. At the time, the only other general-service lamp technology in the market to any significant degree was the

CFL; the general-service LED lamp was barely a blip in the market in 2012 when first introduced at retail for \$60 per bulb, NEMA said in a post explaining the change in its report.

By the end of 2015, traditional incandescent lamps were virtually gone from store shelves and manufacturers were no longer shipping those lamps as a result of EISA-2007. The price of general-service LED lamps had fallen considerably and consumer demand for that lamp started picking up for the first time.



Over the past two years, as A-line LEDs grew in share of market, NEMA realized that the reported LED lamp shipments significantly understated the actual share of LED lamp shipments because a significant volume of non-NEMA-Member imports of A-line LED lamps was not reflected in the Index. In 2017, the U.S. government began reporting A-line LED lamp imports for

domestic consumption for the first time and this information, along with other information, has enabled NEMA to better measure domestic A-line LED shipments.

In addition to adjusting for the newly available LED data, NEMA has discontinued reporting of incandescent A-line lamps in the Lamp Index. After about 2015, incandescent A-line lamps had essentially left the "general service" applications and only low lumen and specialty lamps remained.

NEMA has now revised its Lamp Index to begin with the year 2017 when additional data became available and now reflects more closely what consumers see on store shelves.

Got an Item for Bulletin Board?

It's easy to have your company included in the pages of *Electrical Wholesaling's* Bulletin Board. It's as simple as submitting a description and photographs.

Some of the subjects covered in Bulletin Board include:

- Charitable Events/Donations
- Product Promotions
- Contests • Ground Breakings
- Distributor Support/Training
- Industry Awards/Recognitions

Send pertinent information to Doug Chandler, Executive Editor, 9800 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS 66212. Or e-mail information to doug.chandler@informa.com. All electronic photos should be in "jpg," "tif" or "eps" format at no less than 300 dots per inch. Questions? Call (913) 967-1951.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

January 16–20, 2019

LIGHTOVATION: DALLAS INTERNATIONAL LIGHTING SHOW

Dallas; Dallas Market Center, dallasmarketcenter.com/markets/lightovation

January 20–24

BICSI WINTER CONFERENCE

Orlando, FL; BICSI, www.bicsi.org

January 21–23

NAED WESTERN REGION CONFERENCE

Palm Desert, CA; National Association of Electrical Distributors, www.naed.org

January 29–31

NAW EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

Washington, DC; National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, www.naw.org

February 5–7

DISTRIBUTECH CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

New Orleans; www.distributech.com

February 6–9

NEMRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dallas; National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association, www.nemra.org

February 25–27

AD ECOMMERCE SUMMIT

Fort Worth, TX; Affiliated Distributors, www.adhq.com

February 25–27

NAED SOUTH CENTRAL REGION CONFERENCE

Tampa, FL; NAED, www.naed.org

February 27–March 1

STRATEGIES IN LIGHT

Las Vegas; Strategies Unlimited, www.strategiesinlight.com

Two Associations Under New Management

The Control System Integrators Association (CSIA) and WIRES, an international trade association promoting investment in the North American electric transmission system, recently tapped Kellen, a global association management and communications company, to handle full-service management, including public advocacy, membership support and industry leadership.

“We look forward to collaborating with Kellen to deliver on our mission to advance the industry of control system integration” says CSIA CEO Jose Rivera. “This partnership is crucial in our day-to-day operations and it will lead us into the next phase of serving an expanding membership with excellence.”

James Hoecker, Executive Director of WIRES and former Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission said, “Kellen will provide our organization with logistical support and strategic guidance for increasing our membership and will help us magnify our impact. We’re looking forward to utilizing Kellen’s platform for public affairs and advocacy.”

Kellen provides comparable services for over 100 trade associations, professional societies and charitable organizations representing over 10,000 companies and 100,000 professionals worldwide.

OmniCable Receives Risk Control Award

OmniCable Corp., West Chester, PA, was awarded the EDIC Charles Steiner Risk Control Award from the Elite Distributors Insurance Company’s (EDIC) for the second straight year for its effective safety programs & performance, favorable claims experience, and participation in risk control workshops in 2018. OmniCable has been a member of EDIC, a member-owned group captive, since 2015.

“We are humbled to win this award again. Providing a safe work environment for our employee-owners is our number one priority,” said Jim Staeger, director of operations, OmniCable, in a release. “Our ownership culture has helped foster a strong safety mentality throughout the company. When people are empowered to speak up and share their ideas, good things happen.”

Focal Point Adds WELL Building Standard Resources to Website

Lighting manufacturer Focal Point LLC, Chicago, which concentrates on human-centric lighting and acoustic products, has expanded its website to offer visitors a host of information on the WELL Building Standard, an international standard focused on human health and wellness.

The WELL Building Standard, administered by the International Well Building Institute (IWBI), is becoming an important standard for buildings, interior spaces, and communities seeking to implement, validate and measure features that support and advance human health and wellness. WELL is part of a larger movement in architecture that seeks to create buildings that are not only sustainable but better for the humans that occupy them.



"Now more than ever, designers are creating more human-centric environments and lighting is extending beyond just luminaires. We are committed to providing the architecture and design community the tools to enhance architecture and elevate the human spirit," said Mike Thornton, CMO for Focal Point, in a release.

The web page includes an easy to navigate menu that allows users to compare WELL v1 and WELL v2 pilot, both currently available for project registration, an overview of features related to lighting and sound management for both versions, and resources for product compliance that support the achievement of the features.

Focal Point has established an internal team of experts to support customer inquiries related to the WELL standards.

Eclipse Tools is Now Delivering Sales & Marketing Content through RepFiles

Eclipse Tools is now delivering sales and marketing collateral to their sales representatives and distributors through the RepFiles NEMRA and NAED Edition applications.

Designed specifically for manufacturers, their sales reps and distributors, the RepFiles system ensures salespeople have the most up-to-date and complete package of sales and marketing materials available to them 24/7 on their mobile devices and Windows 10 computers. There is no cost for sales reps or distributors to access their manufacturers' content, which is available inside the RepFiles NEMRA and NAED Edition apps. Once users receive access from their manufacturers, they can download content to their device for offline use, view files, play videos, send files as email attachments and more. Any updates made by the companies delivering content are reflected on their users' devices after a simple sync.

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The Modern Sales Ninja

How combining ancient techniques with new technologies can make sales calls more effective and productive, make relationship-building more dynamic and make everybody more money.

Outside salespeople operate in a rapidly changing environment, and lately the changes have seemed to accelerate. Customer expectations are being reshaped by technology and the free flow of information. To truly excel and thrive in today's sales realm, the salesperson must watch closely, move quickly and land extremely precise strikes on the customer's pain points, like a sales ninja.

A modern ninja of electrical sales must have a deep grounding in the ancient wisdom of the selling arts and the discipline to master and apply every subtlety of the ancient techniques. He or she must also have complete command of the specialized tools and technologies that allow him or her to appear, seemingly from nowhere, with the right solution at the right time, and then melt into the shadows so the customer can pursue their work.

OK, no one in sales wants to melt into the shadows. You want to be remembered for saving the day, providing the perfectly right solution, helping customers achieve their business objectives, and you want to become one of the customer's most valuable allies for problem-solving in the future.

The way to do that really hasn't changed in any meaningful way, despite the sweeping changes we've all seen in technology and culture over the past decade or so, say those with the perspective to know.

"The best salesperson 40 years ago would be the best salesperson today," says Bill Devereaux, principal of R/B Sales, Marion, IA. "That person would have skills around communication,



By Doug Chandler, Senior Staff Writer

organization, and the desire to hunt and kill and drag it home."

It's not just that desire, though, Devereaux says. It's more than that. "They have to have the soft skills. They have to have a symbiotic relationship with the best technologies out there at a given time. All the tools in front of them are simply that: tools. But it still comes down to a solid person with a desire to be successful, to build relationships, and the integrity to do it the right way so they're not burning any bridges along the way."

What has changed are the expectations customers have about speed, responsiveness, dedication and support. Whether you're a seasoned salesperson or a newcomer, here's a look at some of the timeless sales truths and the tools and techniques a modern sales ninja can use to address them in today's selling environment.

Know your stuff. Electrical salespeople have always relied on deep product knowledge to do their jobs. This is just as important now as it has always been, but in some ways the emphasis has changed. Now customers come to the table with far more information than they have had before.

Online resources from your company's website to competitor websites, manufacturer websites,

trade publication websites, e-newsletters, product review websites, discussion forums and instructional videos provide much of the basic information for product selection before the customer ever gets in touch with you.

"The nature of salespeople has changed from back in the day when we were the deliverers of catalogs and the first stop for people who had questions about our products. Those days have come and gone. We're now the second line of defense," says Charles Cohon, executive director of the Manufacturers Agents National Association (MANA), Morton Grove, IL. "People will do their

first research now, obviously, on the Internet, so when they meet with a salesperson they've done their initial review of the products, they've done their web search, and if anything there's an overabundance of options. They need a human being as a filter to separate the wheat from the chaff."

sales ninja won't be satisfied with the training everyone else is getting.

Beyond the generally available resources, many manufacturers offer training online, often targeted to installers and end users rather than salespeople, which is an essential way to keep up with the latest changes. Educational sites such as

"If you are a slow, 'order taker' in this business you will be wiped out."

—Larry Rodger III, Synergy Sales

This overabundance of product information empowers the customer but sometimes in the wrong way.

"Customers are doing a tremendous amount of research online before they reach out to us. Which can help the sales process. But that can also create some problems," says Paul Rudalavage, lighting control specialist for Synergy Sales, Fairless Hills, PA. "The tip I heard and follow is that 50% of customers are on the wrong product when they contact you. Remember that and always offer alternatives to confirm what the customer wants. Even if they call you and think that they may know what they want. Be a true solutions provider."

The salesperson has to be ready to step beyond the basic features and benefits from the outset, which saves time and sets the tone: They can then can jump right into helping the customer satisfy business needs. In today's business environment, that's a key transition.

Show how your company's products and services can help customers meet what they are trying to achieve for their companies. If you do this effectively, then price becomes secondary to the prospect's more critical business needs.

The wealth of data online is also a huge opportunity for salespeople to deepen their knowledge of the entire market. Every electrical salesperson has an opportunity, often an obligation, to attend training courses and more informal lunch-and-learn educational sessions presented by their suppliers. A modern

Lynda.com and Fred Pryor offer courses in more general business, technology and analytical skills. Hopefully, your company is spending some time and money on education so salespeople gain the benefits every day in the field.

Know your competition. One of the wonders that arises from the proliferation of electronic commerce sites is that your competitors' value propositions, services, product offerings and sometimes pricing are all out there on a website for you to pick through, examine, question, learn from (and occasionally make fun of). You can rest assured they're doing the same with yours.

"Because all of the most fundamental information is already online, that means your information is transparent to your competitors and competitors' information is transparent to you. If you don't spend time on your competitors' websites, shame on you," says Cohon of MANA. "Your customers will have looked at your information online and your competitors' information online and will already have that information before they call you."

Beyond the online information, trade publications, local news sites and the market grapevine will be helpful to keep you abreast of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses.

The ease of ordering online has become a critical differentiator, says Larry Rodger III, principal of Synergy Sales. "The new purchasing options online are a constant reminder that people want to be serviced in a way that makes doing busi-

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ness easy. If you are a slow, 'order taker' in this business you will be wiped out."

Know your customer. Focus your attention on helping the customer achieve goals, not on selling him or her more widgets. That means taking the time to develop a fundamental knowledge of the industry they're in and the challenges they face. Take a genuine interest in the customer's business. Spend some time on websites that cover the customer's industry, and occasionally send links to or printed copies of articles you think may be of interest to the customer — along with a personal note.

"I advise all the people I coach, if you haven't created Google Alerts for your top accounts you're missing the boat," says Frank Hurtte, River Heights Consulting, Davenport, IA.

Take initiative in helping customers solve problems. Whether it be bundling products or seeking better pricing from manufacturers, customers will always appreciate steps a salesperson takes to make the job simpler and more cost effective.

Ask customers what they want from you. Ask your customer what services they would like to see in a supplier. Is it shorter delivery time, more diverse product line or deeper inventory? Don't assume you know what your customer values.

Get to know all the buying influences. Develop relationships with people from all different departments within a customer's company. Don't just call on your buddy and consider the job done. If or when that person leaves, you will have to scramble to keep the business if you haven't developed other relationships. For instance, at an electrical contractor, you'll definitely get to know the personnel in the estimating and purchasing departments. You must also meet the field supervisors, electricians, credit managers and other people who may have a say on a buying decision.

In the present business and cultural climate, one of the most important bits of information you can gather about each of the various buying influences is how they like to communicate. It's no longer



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possible to make assumptions. In general Millennials avoid phone conversations for basic information. They prefer a text message they can act on when they get a moment and refer back to later.

But this doesn't hold across the board, which you can tell just by watching all the gray-hairs texting madly during breaks at an industry conference. Some people prefer e-mail rather than text messages and others prefer phone calls, some even prefer a message via LinkedIn or a Skype call. Your sales ninja skills have to be very sharp in all modes of communication.

And don't be offended too easily by what can seem like lapses in etiquette. One sales manager for a major lighting firm tells a story about trying to adapt to the ways of her Millennial direct-reports. "I would text them and ask them to call me and, instead of a phone call they would text me back: 'What about?' At first I was offended, but then I realized, they weren't being rude, they just wanted to make sure they had the information I might need before they called. They didn't want to waste time and not have the answers I needed. It's not wrong, it's just a different way of doing things."

Learn to talk to business leaders, not just buyers. The top executives at your accounts have responsibilities and a perspective that require a different value proposition, and developing relationships with those who make the decisions and ultimately write the checks may be the

most elite ninja move of all.

"Salespeople need to learn how to talk to business leaders," says Hurtte of River Heights Consulting. "This is a new language for most, because business leaders could 'give a shit' about your new fancy technology. They want to know about how you are impacting their business — financially, production wise, competitive advantages provided. Understand these guys don't give a rat's ass about how many turns it takes to tighten the screw that holds the wire, they want to know, 'How can this solution improve their market position?' As soon as you start talking product you're out the door."

"By the way, the best time to talk to them is the day after you saved them a lot of money," he adds. "Maybe his purchasing team forgot to order this product, and it has a three-week order lead time. I energize my team and we call all over the country and it's on its way to you, and this is just the normal service we provide our customers. We get you what you need so you avoid downtime."

Follow through, follow up and set yourself apart. Tracking information on customers is another area where your ninja sales game needs to be so locked-down that it's invisible.

Since the introduction of customer relationship management (CRM) systems a generation ago most salespeople have both loved and loathed them. Most salespeople would rather cold-call a rabid

hyena than spend another hour entering notes in all those form fields for every sales call. Nonetheless centralizing and organizing data gathered on calls is essential to giving top-level customer care, especially involving your inside team.

The ninja move is to turn the system to your advantage. Relying on your memory will realistically only help you with your most important accounts while details of the smaller calls slip away over the years.

“The way I like to use sales software is as a sales process,” says Ken Hooper, president of the National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association (NEMRA), Rosslyn, VA. “CRM is your selling process that keeps you, the sales manager and the organization on track so you know at any time where the pipeline is. Use it as a discipline, as a selling

if you’re sincere. Are you out for a quick profit or a relationship? You either save them material cost or labor cost and once they come to the conclusion that you’re sincere, that opens it up. That’s my style of selling. It’s not a big technical pitch, but get me with a contractor looking to take some money out of the job and I can build from there.”

Building strong customer relationships does still involve the fun stuff, taking clients out for a little recreation to learn more about each other. Don’t rely entirely on your scratch golf game, though. Hurtte notes that most Millennials will find a reason to decline an invitation to your country club or yacht club — they are too busy trying to pay off their student loans to be impressed — but will gladly join you for a pint at a local

with a fountain pen. Whenever you want to break through all of the electronic clutter, a handwritten note is the killer app.

Speed is the rule. In terms of changing customer demands, this may be the most important point of all.

“It seems more often than ever that the company to give back the right answer to the application or answer the price question first gets the order,” says Devereaux of R/B Sales. “Every buyer I speak to has more handed to them to get done than they did two years ago.”

One key to establishing the impression of lightning-fast responsiveness lies in setting expectations. It’s best to under-promise and over-deliver with your responses. One of the easiest ways to put smiles on the faces of customers is when you tell them you will get back to them with the information they need by noon, and you call back within the hour.

Another key is to set aside time to respond. “The effective outside salesperson’s role also now involves desk time every day (probably an hour or two) for service and support,” says Rudalavage of Synergy Sales. “This is needed to keep up with the increased demand for speed of response.”

Rely on your team. When asked about the need for speed, rep firms in particular pointed to inside sales as the most essential factor in providing quick responses to customer inquiries, tenacious expediting and rapid problem solving. Cultivate your inside people as your most important allies, keep them informed, help them learn and they will back you up all day long.

“Outside salespeople who have a symbiotic relationship with their inside support team and who can collaborate with them openly have the best chance for success,” says Devereaux of R/B Sales.

Conclusion. Being a modern sales ninja doesn’t require black clothing, throwing stars or katana swords, but if you devote yourself to the art, keep your contact list, reminder apps, product and market knowledge and customer focus razor sharp, you can come out of the shadows and capture the customer’s loyalty and your competitors won’t even know what happened.

“Understand these guys don’t give a rat’s ass how many turns it takes to tighten the screw that holds the wire, they want to know, how can this solution improve their market position?”

—Frank Hurtte, River Heights Consulting

process, and it will keep you focused, concentrating on the 20% of customers that yield 80% of your business.”

Build your relationships to last. Strong customer relationships are still the key to sustaining sales over time. You build them from small orders, you build them for the long term, and you start by establishing the basis for them to trust you personally.

“It’s a step-by-step building process,” says Bob Powell of Kunz-Powell & Assocs., Malvern, PA. “Get to know the person, find out personal information so you have some insight into how they work and what’s important to them. Then take them through what they use and find some openings for your products. Once a person is buying from you, they get used to buying from you, and they recognize

brewery or a live music performance.

Once you have established a good relationship with a customer, keep treating him or her as a new prospect. “It’s an interesting fact of life that big companies do a lot more to get new business than to keep the existing business that they have,” says Hank Bergson of Henry Bergson Associates, Katonah, NY. Salespeople should relish going after their competitors’ house accounts. On the other side of the coin, how do you keep and maximize the business you’ve already got?

Your CRM system or some combination of note-taking and reminder systems can prompt you to send a note on birthdays and other special occasions, the kind of personal touches that pay huge dividends. Don’t underestimate the power of a handwritten note. Picture the ninja

Can't-Miss Sales Tips from the Pros

Grizzled sales veterans and rookie salespeople can learn from *EW*'s resource of real-world sales tips.

Distributors, reps and manufacturers in the electrical business come in many different stripes and sizes, but they all have one thing in common: They employ field salespeople who live to serve customers' needs and seal the deal.

For many of their co-workers, road warriors have a somewhat glamorous image. They see these salespeople as the sweet-talking men and women with the company cars and expense accounts who are unshackled by nine-to-five desk jobs and free to roam the open road. What these other employees don't always see is the pressure of a paycheck depending wholly or in part on hitting monthly quotas and the dawn-to-dusk demands of a job requiring salespeople to be assertive, upbeat, knowledgeable and helpful even on those days when they don't feel like pressuring a customer for an order or dealing with an irate customer going ballistic because someone in the warehouse forgot to pack a critical replacement part in an order.

You may be the "outside guy" for a recent start-up with a handful of employees or a cog in a national sales machine with hundreds of salespeople. Perhaps you are a new outside salesperson who just finished the traditional industry internship of working in the warehouse, making deliveries and working the counter. Even if you are a veteran salesperson who could sell a box of pink locknuts before you roll out of bed in the morning, you can still learn a few new tricks of the trade from the pros.

Over the years, *Electrical Wholesaling* has published dozens of selling tips from readers who made their living selling electrical supplies. You may remember reading articles on sales from *EW* authors and electrical sales professionals including John McCarthy, Jim Newton, Bob Finley, Terry Sater, Charley Cohon and Mike Dandridge.

In this article, we picked out some of our favorite tips from these authors that will still work for sales veterans and rookies. We couldn't fit them all in this issue, but they are available at www.ewweb.com. Just search for "Can't-Miss Sales Tips from the Pros." Enjoy!



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1. Listen when thy customer speaks. You can learn more from customers by listening to what they have to say about applications or problems than by dominating a conversation on a sales call with a product's features and benefits. If you are doing more talking than listening on a sales call, you are not doing it right. "Leave yourself out of it, and don't try to mind read by anticipating what the customer is going to say," says Mike Dandridge of High Voltage Performance. "Pretend as if your livelihood depends upon what your customer says. It does."

2. Sell thy value. One strategy that helps when a customer asks you to beat or match a quote is to sell him or her on the concept of "least total cost." To do this, you must be able to prove how the value-added services your company offers actually save the customer money in the long run. Examples of these services might include your company's credit and return policies, knowledgeable inside salespeople, a 24-hour hotline, emergency delivery, application assistance and expediting.

3. Use more than thy gift of gab to seal a deal. Salespeople too often rely on their silver tongues to sell products

and don't back up their sales pitches with product samples, customized literature, application videos and other sales tools. In sales, seeing is believing, and providing sales support materials or product samples makes it easier for customers to visualize the sales solutions a salesperson offers.

4. Know the difference between a profitable order and a dog. Not all orders are good orders, and salespeople must know when they are making or losing money for their companies. A good salesperson always takes the total cost of a transaction into account before agreeing to a price with customers.

5. Don't underestimate the value of networking. Electrical distributors' salespeople should tap into every available resource that can provide insight into a customer. It's surprising how much you can learn about a company from noncompeting salespeople who sell software, shelving or office supplies to your customer; town officials who deal with the company on business matters; and other contacts in a local community who you meet at civic activities, school or church.

6. Sell thy customer hard as hell. There are no shortcuts to success, and the outside salespeople who can still get by on a smile, joke and a good golf game are few and far between.

7. Don't talk religion or politics with customers. Although the subjects might be fine when chatting with your clone, no one else will agree with you on all issues. Avoid the subjects of religion and politics in business.

8. Do invite a customer to lunch when you end a sales call at noon and are headed to the restaurant across the street. Although many customers will pass on the offer, it's polite to extend the invitation. By not extending the offer, you run the risk of offending a customer who may happen to go to the restaurant that day.

9. Think long-term. One new salesman refused to take back surplus lamps from an industrial account. The new salesman's predecessor had sold the lamps to the customer, and the salesperson thought returning the products would unfairly reduce his commission. Instead of using the return as a chance to build a new relationship, the salesperson lost the account to a competitor.

10. Be positive. People like to be around positive people. "When you come into your customer's place of business, they don't want to hear your kids are sick or about your aches and pains," says Bob Finley, former president of Glasco Electric, St. Louis, and a long-time author for *Electrical Wholesaling*. "They have plenty of problems themselves. Salespeople should put on a positive front."

11. Don't underestimate the profit potential of getting an electrical contractor's first call. The electrical distributor who regularly gets the first call from a customer will probably get the bulk of the order, while distributors who get the second or third call usually get the part of the order that the first-call distributor doesn't want. These are usually back-order items that require a lot of care and handling but don't always produce enough profit for the extra trouble.

12. Never disclose confidential information about

an account to competitors. Professional salespeople never discuss confidential business outside a customer's office. Your customers know you call on their competitors, and they expect you to keep their business private.

13. Introduce customers to new market niches such as residential VDV or lighting retrofits. An electrical contractor might enjoy the opportunity to get away from the rock-bottom pricing of bid work, and they will appreciate learning about a potentially profitable market niche.

14. Use your company's business smarts to help electrical contractors run their own businesses more profitably. Electrical contractors have plenty of technical knowledge, but they often lack basic business skills. Running a profitable business is a lot different than pulling wire, and most electrical contractors will readily admit that they can use some advice on bookkeeping, accounting, personnel management and work flow. Introduce them to the people at your company who can offer this assistance.

15. Keep current on changes in the National Electrical Code (NEC). Changes in the NEC create sales opportunities, and salespeople must know how they affect their products.

16. Be confident. Customers like to be around winners, and salespeople that project an air of confidence are more likely to get an order than gloom-and-doom salespeople who always mope around and gripe.

17. Make one more sales call. Mike Dandridge advises customers to commit to see one customer per week beyond what's on your call schedule. Unless it throws you behind schedule, make the call while you're in the area. Keep a record of these calls, but make it simple. Make a check mark in your planner if you get an order, jot down a "P" if the call was productive and write in a "B" if the whole thing was a bust.

18. Don't underestimate the importance of first impressions. People usually decide within the first 15 seconds whether or not they like a new acquaintance.

19. Be trustworthy. Long-term relationships result from long-term trust. You must produce evidence of your trustworthiness early in a business relationship. That means displaying trustworthy qualities such as dependability, punctuality and accountability. Over time, consistency supports the evidence. Be dependable in the small things as well as the large. Follow through, keep promises and take ownership of every interaction with your customer.

20. Ask the right questions. Always ask for the order. Many salespeople are afraid of being pushy. They think they're asking when they say, "You don't need anything today, do you?" or "Guess I can't talk you into buying something." This attempt at homespun charm may have worked in Mayberry, but if you use it in the real world, you'll starve to death. Use simple open-ended questions. "What do you need today?"

Want to see the rest of Electrical Wholesaling's Can't-Miss Sales Tips? Check them out in the expanded online version of this article at www.ewweb.com.

What's Your Target Word Count?

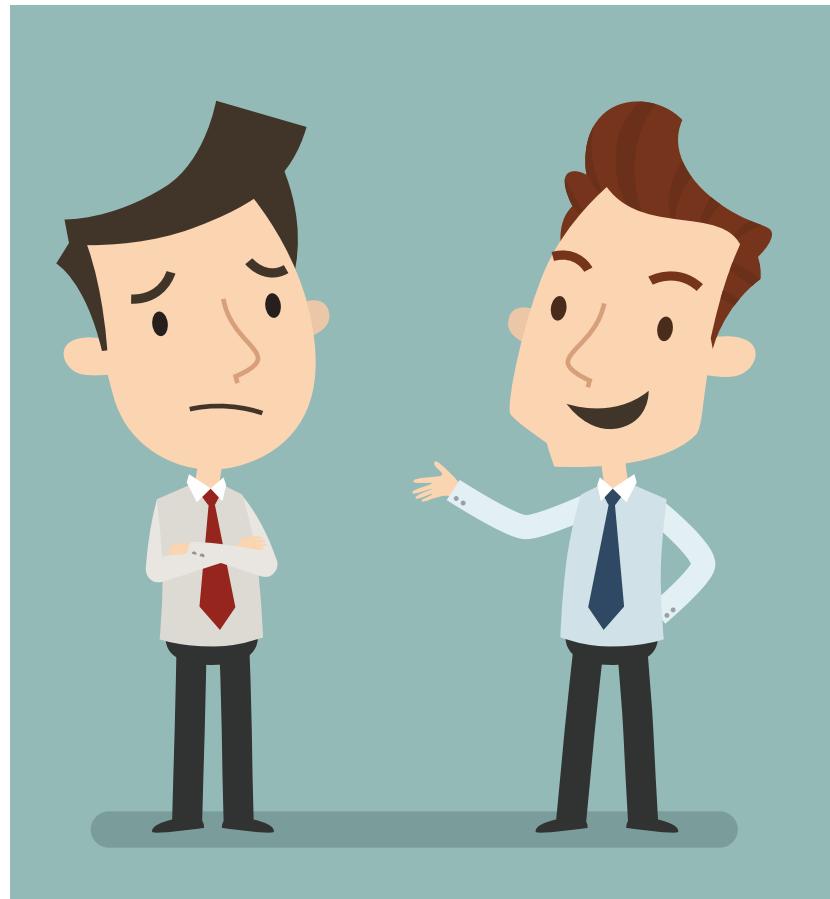
Salespeople can learn more about a customer by listening instead of talking.

One of the most popular and widespread trends in the fitness and health industry is counting steps with an electronic or “smart device.” Step counting is a booming industry. How booming? Well, a quick Google search revealed that the Fitbit has sold more than 76 million devices worldwide since 2010. These devices provide their user with an ongoing record of progress and efficiency offering up to the minute updates on your progress or lack thereof. The health benefit to counting steps aside, step counting also offers the user a challenge and a sense of accomplishment when the goal is met.

Could sales professionals use such a device on the job if it measured words instead of steps? Imagine if you have a “word goal” for sales calls, and that there was a correct number of words a salesperson should speak when meeting with a customer because it would increase the probability of a sale. It would help them avoid the nightmare scenario that salespeople should dread — talking themselves out of a sale.

On sales calls I like to ask the client to think about the person he or she thinks is the best salesperson calling on their company, and what attributes that person has that makes them the best. The benefit in asking this question is that the customer will then tell you exactly what you need to do to win their business.

By Mark Serafino



anypix/Stock/ Getty Images Plus

I recently had the opportunity to ask that question of a very good customer of ours and his answer was surprising. He told me when he was promoted to his current position as VP of marketing, he invited all of his company's key vendors in so they could learn more about his company and try to find common areas where they could work together on

mutually growing their business. Most of the vendors made the same critical error — they came to the meeting with a stack of literature and product samples and proceeded to talk all about themselves.

One vendor stood out by a mile to the customer. At his appointment, this salesman left his briefcase and sample case in the car and showed up carrying

only a pad and pen. When the meeting started, he told the customer he had plenty of literature and samples to share with the client, but felt it was more important that he first learn about the customer, their business strategy, goals and needs. After learning this information, he could determine which of his company's products and services would complement and enhance the customer's business.

THE POWER OF LISTENING

The customer's answer to that salesperson was a blueprint for successful sales calls that can be used on any customer visit. That model salesperson's most effective tool was not his tongue, but his ears. By asking questions, this salesperson opened a doorway for the customer to describe important elements about their business. By asking a customer the right questions and intently listening to the answer, you can learn about their short- and long-term goals, buying habits, supply challenges, and many important bits of information that will give you the opportunity to offer the right solution upfront and get closer to the next stage in the selling process.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Asking open-ended questions during a sales call is not a new idea. Thousands of books and articles have been written on the topic. However, an open-ended question specific to the customer's business will push the relationship door wide open. Customer-specific questions do not necessarily have to be about their business and its products and services; they can focus on your specific interaction with their organization, either good or bad.

For example, several years ago I accompanied one of our salespeople on a call to a potentially large customer whose business with us had stagnated at the same level for several consecutive years with no sign of growth. Our frustration was that we knew they had the potential to purchase ten times more than they currently were buying.

During the meeting, I asked the purchasing agent if he was aware of the sales

strategies we had employed to earn/win more of his business, describing the various salespeople and programs that we had put before them over a four-year period, and asked him why he thought we were not successful. The look on his face told us he was not accustomed to a salesperson asking such a pointed question. He stared off into space for a moment and then told me they were very comfortable doing business with their current supplier, and that he couldn't think of a reason his company should make a change. In so many words, he told me to be happy with what we were getting because it was all we were going to get.

Before wrapping the meeting up and leaving with our tails between our legs, we asked the purchasing agent a follow-up question. What is the one thing his current supplier did that he thought they could do better? He looked at us thoughtfully and said they were incurring added expenses such as packaging and handling fees that were disproportionate to their overall sales. We discussed some mutual ideas for a solution and within 30 days became their primary supplier.

To our benefit, personalized, honest discussions about our business kicked open the door to our ongoing relationship and turned a marginal customer into a lifelong business partner. Our competition's mistake was to have enjoyed the customer's loyalty while failing to offer it in return. Open-ended questions during the selling process are hugely important, but no more important than asking them as the selling relationship matures.

Sure, asking valued business partners how you are doing can be risky as they might just tell you things you don't want to hear. But it's better to hear them while you're still enjoying the business than at a meeting where they inform you that you're no longer number one.

LEAVING YOUR EGO IN THE CAR

Two other attributes that our "model salesperson" brought to his meeting were preparation and humility. He was clearly prepared to present his company's

products and services but only after he knew and understood where his company could fit with the customer's needs.

A salesperson's ego can be their best and worst asset, depending on their ability to control it. In this case, the model salesperson had the humility to tell the customer he wanted to learn about them and their needs before offering his proposition. With a combination of ego and lack of preparation, (which can indicate a salesperson's selling technique has become stale), salespeople all too often burst into a sales meeting and regurgitate in practiced cadence the features and benefits of products without any knowledge of what the customer actually needs. They think it works because they have other customers buying from the company.

The difference in exceeding the expectations of employers and customers is rooted in our ability to prepare in advance for meetings, enabling us to ask customer-specific, open-ended questions, and by checking our ego at the door.

As to the question whether there is a correct number of words for any given sales call, the answer is, like a fingerprint, every sales call is unique and no two are the same. In actuality, a pre-determined word count would be stiff and very ineffective. However, what we can conclude is that consistently successful sales professionals know listening trumps speaking. And, since every sales call is limited by time, the significance of the words we use to positively impact our customer's business challenges will always trump our word count.

The next time you make a sales call, try leaving your practiced features and benefits presentation in your car. Be prepared to ask questions, listen and let your word count be measured by the number of words it takes to satisfy your client's needs. Hopefully, you will find yourself saying the last five words of every successful sales call, "Thank you for the order."

Mark Serafino is regional vice president for OmniCable's Western Region. He can be reached at mserafino@omnicable.com.

The Road Ahead for Electric Vehicles

The Copper Development Association's recent conference, *EVs: Navigating the Road Ahead*, offered attendees a mind-bending update on the potential and challenges ahead for widespread implementation of electric vehicles.



www.facebook.com/PlagueDoctor/ /Stock/Gettymages Plus

While electrical folks think of the electric vehicle market in terms of the sales opportunities for electrical products needed for the installation of commercial fast-charging stations or adding 240V circuits in homes for those overnight charges, other presenters and attendees at the Copper Development Association's recent conference, *EVs: Navigating the Road Ahead*, conference had different interests in the market. Presenters at the CDA event included representatives from auto companies; state public transportation systems and other state agencies; the Southern Co. electric utility; and trade groups including the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA); Edison Electric Institute (EEI); Energy Storage Association, and the Alliance to Save Energy.

All had slightly different takes on how electric vehicle are

impacting their interests in the energy market. Some panelists are most interested in the combination of public and private investment that will be necessary to build out a nationwide network of charging stations to support the millions of electric vehicles expected to hit the roads over the next few years. State officials had concerns about ensuring that the charging infrastructure would be installed in all areas of their cities, from low-income neighborhoods to high-rises.

Technologists on the panel expressed interest in seeing how and if owners of electric vehicles could make money by selling the unused electricity their batteries produce back to electric utilities and other power producers. One panelist used the example of fleets of electric school buses that sit dormant during the summer, but could generate electricity to be sold on the grid — producing an additional revenue stream for schools.

Because of its interest in new markets for copper, event sponsor Copper Development Association (CDA) is also a

By Jim Lucy, Content Director

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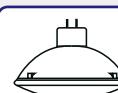
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Electrify America/Simon

Simon, the global real estate investment trust (REIT) with a large national footprint in U.S. shopping malls, recently teamed with Electrify America to install 10 DC fast chargers at its San Francisco Premium Outlets. The charging site features eight 150 kW chargers and two 350 kW chargers. The 350 kW chargers are capable of recharging an electric vehicle at 20 miles a minute — providing 200 miles of vehicle driving range in just 10 minutes. In addition to San Francisco Premium Outlets, Electrify America will install charging systems at Simon locations nationwide including 17 centers in California, with 95 additional chargers.

big believer in electric vehicles because of how much copper they require for motors, batteries, inverters, wires and charging stations. According to CDA data, a battery for an electric vehicle contains an estimated 183 lbs of copper, while the battery necessary to power an electric bus weighs in at 814 lbs.

The first session at the conference, held Dec. 11 in Washington, D.C., explored the various public policy decisions at the local, state and federal level that must be made to support and fund the installation of thousands of public charging stations across the nation. These charging stations will be needed to help get folks over their “range anxiety” (running out of charge before they find a charging station), and to attract the interest of the general public or commercial interests beyond the early adopters. Jason Hartke, president of the Alliance to Save Energy, said the scope of this build-out will need to be similar to the construction of the Interstate Highway System started by President Eisenhower in the 1950s.

The Electrify America initiative to install thousands of fast-chargers across the United States is impressive in its scope and potential. Wayne Killen, the Electrify America representative on the panel, said his group is in the process of installing 2,000 chargers at 484 sta-

HOW MUCH COPPER IS USED IN AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

Vehicle	Pounds of copper
Conventional cars	18-49
Hybrid electric vehicles (HEV)	85
Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV)	132
Battery electric vehicles (BEV)	183
Hybrid electric bus	196
Battery electric bus	814

The Copper Development Association (CDA) says electric vehicles have an enormous appetite for copper, with a basic electric vehicle requiring 183 pounds and an electric bus requiring 814 pounds.

tions around the United States. The 350 kW chargers being installed are capable of recharging an electric vehicle very quickly — providing 200 miles of vehicle driving range in just 10 minutes. That’s super-fast when compared to the overnight charging often required in residential installations that utilize Level 1 (120V) or Level 2 (240V) EV chargers. According to Electrify America’s website, its DC (direct current) Fast EV charging stations will be located along high-traffic corridors in 39 states, including two cross-country routes. “Locations will accommodate between four and ten chargers, with charging power levels up to 350kW available at every station, capable of adding 20 miles of range per minute to a vehicle,” it said. “Nationally,

each planned station site will be located no more than 120 miles apart and, on key East and West Coast highways, planned locations average only 70 miles apart.”

Panelists tossed around a variety of estimates on just how much the EV market is expected to grow over the next few years. The Edison Electric Institute estimates that more than 1 million EVs are now on the road, and that by 2025 that number will grow to 8 million. While those numbers sound impressive, they still account for a small percentage of the 260 million-plus passenger cars registered in the United States through 2016, according to www.statistica.com, and most likely an equally small percentage of trucks, buses and other commercial vehicles.

UL-Listed 250V Tamper-Resistant Receptacles

Leviton recently announced their UL listing of heavy-duty industrial specification grade 15A and 20A 250V tamper-resistant single receptacles. They meet the requirements of Article 406.12 of the National Electric Code, as well as meeting Canadian safety requirements. Article 406.12 in the 2017 National Electric Code expanded the locations requiring tamper-resistant receptacles to include preschools and elementary education facilities; dormitories; business offices, corridors, and waiting rooms; medical and dental offices and outpatient facilities; places of waiting in transportation areas; gymnasiums; skating rinks; and auditoriums. A common application for this product is providing power to air conditioning units located in these facilities.

Leviton / www.leviton.com



LED Circuit Strip

With its combination of high efficacy, low profile and precise dimming capabilities, Ai Flex can be cut in 6.5-inch increments for specific applications including a wide variety of cove, millwork, signage, and many other interior applications. The interior LED circuit strip consumes a mere 3.1 watts per foot, with a 124° beam angle, and operates at 24 VDC. The dimming protocols include DMX, 0-10V, and DALI when used with Acclaim's flexible AL Driver Series. Ai Flex is available in a 16.4-foot (5 meter) spool.

Acclaim Lighting / www.acclaimlighting.com

ETL-Listed LED Tape Lighting

Alloy LED has launched the PowerLine 120V AC LED tape light family, a line of direct-wire LED lighting designed to remove many of the barriers to consumer adoption of LED linear lighting. Unlike many tape light providers, Alloy LED is an ETL Factory and can provide ETL-listed AC tape light in customer requested lengths for an easy inspection ready installation. The tape has a hard-wired connection to power, making it possible to dim the AC tape light while complying with the NEC (National Electrical Code).

Alloy LED / www.alloyled.com



Exterior Lighting Control

The partnership between Lutron Electronics and TwistHDM produced a joint launch in mid-2018 of Limelight by Lutron, a wireless exterior lighting control offering that integrates data seamlessly into the company's existing data and management platform, Enterprise Vue. The announcement marks Lutron's first venture into the outdoor lighting control space. Lutron partnered with TwistHDM to deliver a wireless outdoor lighting solution with remote control and management, universal code compliance and a streamlined specification process. To specify Limelight by Lutron, lighting designers must simply identify the number of fixtures in a space.

Lutron / www.lutron.com/limelight



THIS MONTH'S PRODUCT PICKS

LED Floodlights

The AEON Flood Luminaire is designed for a long-life span of over 100,000 hours and is available in five different LED delivered lumen packages: 33,100lm, 44,100lm, 62,100lm, 73,500lm & 105,000lm. The AEON Luminaire has multi-voltage options: 100-277VAC and 347-480VAC. They are also available in various NEMA Beam Spreads, and incorporate field changeable lenses, modules and drivers to save labor and maintenance.

Aeon/HyLite / AEONLEDLighting.com



Thermostat Offers App Control

Stelpro's Maestro thermostat is designed to give users full control over their comfort. Key features include geo fencing and a mobile interface. It can also be linked to an existing Zigbee network controlled by any Zigbee-compatible controller.

Stelpro / www.stelpro.com

Infrared Thermometer

Klein Tools' 20:1 Dual-Laser Infrared Thermometer (Cat. No. IR10) offers a wide measurement range, a tight distance-to-spot ratio, dual targeting lasers, and several calculation modes. "Klein Tools' new 20:1 Dual-Laser Infrared Thermometer enables accurate IR measurements of surface temperatures, and bulk temperatures of air, gas or liquids with standard K-Type probe, with a wide measurement range that makes it the perfect tool for use across various jobsites day-in and day-out," says Sean O' Flaherty, director of product management.

Klein Tools / www.kleintools.com



Exterior LED Floodlights

IP68-approved for outdoor wet applications, the EarthTronics LED Area Light Series is available in 75W to 480W models in 4,000K and 5,000K color of light, providing up to 57,600 lumens per unit. They are designed to offer easily interchangeable mounting options – slip fit, pole mount and trunnion (yoke). The fixtures come with a five-year warranty standard warranty and a 10-year project warranty and may be accepted for utility rebates in many markets.

Earthtronics / www.earthtronics.com



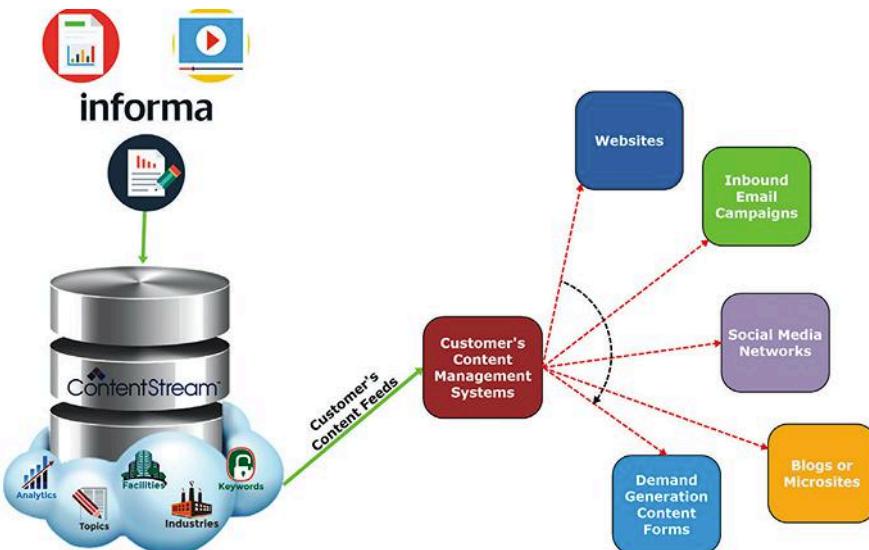
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PRODUCT ALERT

THIS MONTH'S PRODUCT PICKS

Machine Vision LEDs

The DFLW-200 dark field washdown ring light for machine-vision applications is available in an anodized black aluminum housing. The IP68-rated, large-diameter light features the Multi-Drive driver, which allows the light to work in continuous operation or Over-Drive strobe mode. In addition, SafeStrobe technology applies safe working parameters to ensure that high-current LEDs are not damaged when driven beyond their limits.

Smart Vision Lights / smartvisionlights.com



Washer for Telecom Applications

The WILEY Telecom WEEB washer utilizes teeth that eliminate the need to remove nonconductive coatings (e.g. paint and powder coat) when making a bonding connection. The WEEB teeth pierce through most nonconductive coatings and embed into the underlying metal, creating a bonding connection between the lug and the coated metal component where it's installed (e.g. equipment racks, cabinets, enclosures, cable tray, etc.). Not having to remove nonconductive coatings will save on installation time and prevent improper coating removal techniques that can lead to poor connections.



Wiley/Burndy / www.hubbell.com/wiley/en/

Tunable LED Troffers

Available in 2x2 and 2x4 ft sizes, Ledtronics' CLT series of tunable LED recessed troffer lights are designed for standard drop-ceiling troffer and parabolic fixtures in recessed luminaires. Occupancy and ambient light sensing increase visual comfort and energy savings in offices, retail spaces, hotels, resorts, conference rooms, classrooms and healthcare environments. The Title 24 compliant troffers also feature a fully adjustable occupant and daylight sensor, as well as standby dimming.



Ledtronics / www.ledtronics.com

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This index is a service to our readers. Every effort is made to maintain accuracy, but Electrical Wholesaling cannot assume responsibility for errors or omissions.

people

Intralec Electrical Products Ltd., (Mississauga ON): **Murray Chamney**, president, will retire on Feb. 28, 2019. Chamney has been the managing partner at Intralec since Nov. 1999. Chamney began his tenure at Intralec in June, 1980. His voluntary industry positions include CEMRA president (1999); NEMRA director (2000-2001); and Electro-Federation of Canada National Advisory Council (NAC) chair 2016. He was the first manufacturers' representative to become a NAC Chair, and was also awarded the CEMRA Person of the Year in 2011, and the NEMRA GEM award in 2013.



Chamney

Intralec has announced its managing partners going forward. **Cindy Doherty** is the new president, effective Dec. 1. She is partnered with **Greg Moylett**, VP distribution sales, and **John Hadley**, VP project sales. Chamney will remain in an advisory role until February. Intralec Electrical Products operates in southern and central Ontario, Canada. It was founded in 1977, and has grown to become one of the largest full-service rep firms in the country.

U.S. Department of Energy (Washington, DC): **Dr. James R. Brodrick**, lighting program manager for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), has retired after 23 years of DOE service, according to the Illuminating Engineering Society's *LD+A* magazine. Brodrick has long been the DOE's leading advocate for solid-state lighting technology, and has been the architect of the department's strategy to accelerate SSL development. Under his leadership the DOE SSL program encompassed research, development and market introduction strategies.



Brodrick

Brodrick received his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, and worked with the Gas Research Institute, Carrier Corp., Battelle, and other organizations during his private sector years. With DOE, he developed many innovative programs in research and market transformation, including the CALiPER testing program and the LED Lighting Facts database. Under Brodrick's tenure, DOE leadership and technical support also drove the development of new industry standards and

test procedures needed to accommodate the technical differences between SSL and traditional light sources, including LM-79, LM-80 and TM-30.

Myers Emergency Power Systems (EPS) (Bethlehem, PA): This designer and manufacturer of backup power solutions appointed **Becky Gagliardi** as the company's marketing manager. Gagliardi will be responsible for identifying, developing and evaluating marketing communications strategy and coordinating all marketing activities to promote Myers EPS' emergency lighting and power products.



Gagliardi

Prior to joining Myers EPS, Gagliardi served as the digital marketing specialist for Harsco Industrial Patterson-Kelly, where she was responsible for new products introductions, analyzing data and website metrics and coordinating marketing events. She also worked for *The Morning Call* newspaper as an account executive creating advertising campaigns. Gagliardi graduated magna cum laude from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania with a BA in communica-

OBITUARIES

Charley Wampler Denny, former president of Schneider North America, passed away on Nov. 13 in Naples, FL, according to his obituary at www.legacy.com. He was 83 years old. A graduate of Wesleyan and Northwestern Universities, Denny's electrical career started in 1960 after he received his MBA from Northwestern and joined his family's company, Barkelew Electric. Square D purchased Barkelew in 1967, and Denny took on a variety of senior executive roles at Square D, including manager of Square D's Circuit Breaker Division in Cedar Rapids, IA, and VP of the company's Distribution Equipment Group in Lexington, KY. When Square D was purchased by the Schneider Group of Paris, France, he was appointed president of Schneider North America.

Raymond J. Hall, retired executive VP and CEO of the Electronics Representatives Association (ERA), passed away on Nov. 13 in Findlay, OH. He was ERA's longest-serving management executive and is a member of the association's Hall of Fame.

tion studies and is currently pursuing a master's degree in business administration at West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

LSI Industries (North Canton, OH): **Terry Bair** has been appointed to VP of channel sales. With over 30 years in the lighting industry, Bair will drive growth in LSI's commercial and industrial, renovation, and stock and flow lighting solution channels. He was most recently national sales director at EYE Lighting International and held numerous executive posts at Acuity Brands.



Bair

Dominion Electric Supply Co. (Arlington, VA): **Matt Rowan** has joined the company as VP of residential sales. He comes to Dominion with over 19 years of experience in the design industry, and most recently, was the director of the Lifestyle 1/Brand Design Studio within the DC office of international design firm Gensler.

LoneStar Electric Supply (Houston, TX): The company recently welcomed **Joe Jones** to its board of directors. As a member of the LoneStar board, Jones will bring his expert knowledge of the electrical industry, his lifelong relationships with vendors and customers, as well as his passion to provide solutions to help LoneStar deliver superior service. He retired in 2012 after serving for 54 years at Wholesale Electric Supply Co., most recently as senior executive VP and general manager.



Jones

"It's quite an honor for us to add Mr. Jones to our board of directors," said Jeff Metzler, CEO of LoneStar in the press release. "He's highly regarded — certainly by me — but, also throughout our industry and has enjoyed a legendary career. We're delighted that he is bringing his lifetime of experience as an independent electrical distributor to our team to better serve our customers."

Jones said in the release, "LoneStar Electric is a good company filled with good people. They're an independent distributor, which I like, because I was one as well. They've been very successful. I thought that if I could

help them in any way, then I want to be a help to them."

Weidmüller Group (Richmond, VA): **Terry Hodgson** has been promoted to president of Weidmüller Inc. USA and executive VP of Weidmüller North America, which includes operations in the United States, Canada and Mexico. He reports directly to José Carlos Álvarez Tobar, Weidmüller's executive board member and chief marketing and sales officer. Hodgson has full responsibility for Weidmüller operations in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.



Hodgson

Hubbell Inc. (Shelton, CT): The company's board of directors elected **Bonnie Lind** as a director of the company effective Jan. 1. She currently serves as the senior VP, CFO and treasurer of Neenah Inc., an international producer of industrial specialty materials for a variety of end markets. She assumed that role in 2004 after the company was spun out of Kimberly-Clark Corp. Lind served in various financial and strategic roles, includ-

REP NEWS

Hubbell Lighting, Greenville, SC, appointed **PLS**, Kent, WA, as its new representative for the western Washington and southeast Alaska markets. Along with its headquarters in Kent, the agency also features its "PLS Light Lounge" meeting space and learning center in Seattle Located above the AIA (American Institute of Architects) office in downtown Seattle. The Light Lounge was established to provide a central location for specifiers, contractors, distributors and manufacturers to convene, share ideas and learn about lighting.

Shat-R-Shield Inc., Salisbury, NC, hired three new lighting reps: **Bill Wade & Associates BW+A**) Charlotte, NC; **Power Corporation**, Little Rock, AR; and **Quality Electrical Lines**, Canyon, TX. BW+A will represent all Shat-R-Shield products across North and South Carolina. Founded in 1989, BW+A has served the Carolinas for nearly 30 years. Power Corporation will rep all Shat-R-Shield products across Louisiana and Mississippi. QEL has been serving the Texas market for more than 20 years, representing manufacturers in the electrical and telecommunications industries.

ing assistant treasurer and managing Kimberly-Clark's Fiber Division. She received her undergraduate degree in finance from the University of Georgia.

Dakota Supply Group (DSG) (Fargo, ND): The company has promoted **Melissa Lunak** to chief human resources officer. Lunak will lead DSG's human resources team in directing and coordinating employment practices for the company's nearly 700 employee owners. Lunak joined DSG five years ago in the role of HR director. Before joining DSG, Lunak was the director of human resources for the public school system in Detroit Lakes, MN, and before that, served as a systems operations supervisor at a large electrical cooperative in North Dakota.



Lunak

NSi Industries (Huntersville, NC): **David Jackson** joined the company as an inside sales rep. Jackson brings more than 20 years of experience in various roles including inside sales, account management and outside sales. He will be responsible for developing and growing the business. Prior to joining NSi, Jackson held account management and sales positions for Grainger, GE and Eclipse Tools. Most recently he was an outside sales representative for Sparks Belting where he was responsible for the North Carolina and South Carolina territories.



Jackson

United Electric Supply (New Castle, DE): **Greg Sundberg** has been named regional VP of sales, Chesapeake Region and **Phil McCloud** regional VP of sales for the Delaware Valley Region. The company also named Anthony Buonocore director of marketing. Sundberg previously was district sales manager for United. McCloud has advanced within United, having held multiple leadership positions since joining six years ago. McCloud has 24 years of industry experience. Buonocore, formerly president of Westway Electric, will lead digital transformation and non-assigned account growth strategies. At Westway, Buonocore developed and implemented a B2C-styled web strategy targeted toward B2B customers.

Topaz Lighting (Holtsville, NY): **Marc Schwartz**, the company's VP of inside lighting sales, recently retired. He started his career in lighting with Topaz in 1993 and has spent the last 25 years building the Vero Beach, FL, sales team and the Topaz Lighting brand. In addition to his most recent role as VP of inside sales, Schwartz also held several other sales positions, including regional sales manager, national sales manager and VP of sales.



Schwartz

For 15 years prior to joining Topaz, Marc had an interesting job of particular interest to all fans of the 1969 World Champion New York Mets baseball team. He managed a disco in New York City called "Marshmallow," which was owned by Art Shamsky, a popular player from that team.

Schaedler Yesco Distribution (SYD) (Harrisburg, PA): **Jo Lynn Friedel**, SYD's diverse business liaison, has been elected to serve on the board of the Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance (KEEA). KEEA advocates on behalf of clean energy on the local, state and federal levels. Friedel will officially join the board in Jan. 2019.

Warshauer Electric Supply (Tinton Falls, NJ): The company recently promoted several employees to new roles in operations, counter sales and commercial lighting.

Operations. **Anthony Kurilla**, formerly corporate counter manager across all five Warshauer locations for two years, was promoted to the branch manager of Warshauer Electric's headquarters location in Tinton Falls, and **Courtney Gibbs**, who has been working as warehouse assistant, will now take on the role of Tinton Falls warehouse manager. Jason Clayton, former warehouse associate, will assume the assistant warehouse manager role.

Counter Sales. **Jules Calhoun** has been working in the Tinton Falls branch as a warehouse associate for just over a year and was promoted to sales professional at the Lakewood Counter.

Commercial Lighting. **Carol Fernandez** has been working as a commercial lighting specialist at the Parsippany branch since Feb. 2006, while **Stacey Warshauer** has been working as a commercial lighting specialist out of the Tinton Falls branch. Fernandez is taking on the role of the Commercial Lighting North Manager and Warshauer is taking on the role of the Commercial Lighting South Manager. Also in Commercial Lighting, **Sam Marascio** has joined the department after several counter sales positions.



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