

# SELLING THROUGH MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES

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**ELECTRONICS REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION**

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Multiple-line manufacturers' representative organizations deliver more sales in a more effective and efficient manner than any other way of going to market. Today's manufacturers' representative firm, regardless of size, offers a comprehensive package of value-added services that enhances the manufacturers' marketing process. The reasons for using manufacturers' reps are many. Read on and judge for yourself why the multiple-line manufacturers' representative function is the right system for your company.

**Synergistic Multiple-Line Selling:** When manufacturers' representatives sell your product, they present it as part of their "package." This is the synergistic effect of multiple-line selling and the basic principle of the manufacturers' representative function.

If your product is new, it rides along with more established, accepted products that the customer is already buying from the representative organization. Your product fits with other products and is sold at the same time this saves the buyer's time and builds your business.

**Territory Knowledge and Position:** When your company uses manufacturers' representatives, you get a piece of real estate (a market) that is already being covered. They know the territory and the customers. You benefit instantly from the rep organization's past history and current activities.

You retain the representative organization, and they are selling your products TODAY! Of course, it is not quite as simple as that because all effective selling requires training. But, an experienced manufacturers' representative firm costs less to train and comes up to speed faster. You get "feet on the street" faster, at a lower cost.

**Representatives Are a Part of Your Marketing Department:** The manufacturers' representative is a salesperson, but also a vital part of your marketing department. Representatives provide essential marketing intelligence and feedback to you. Multiple-line exposure provides representative organizations with a unique perspective in the marketplace. They often know what will and will not work because of their experience. Their experience becomes yours.

Many manufacturers ask key personnel of manufacturers' representative organizations to serve on advisory "rep councils" as consultants to management. This unique approach has produced valuable input and remarkable results for many companies.

**Sales Forecasting - A Big Pay-off:** Manufacturers' representatives know the value of forecasting - and take it seriously! Representative organizations need to forecast to effectively run their businesses. You benefit because the representative provides valuable marketplace data with high reliability.

**Representative Organizations Provide Support:** Rep firms provide your company with territorial offices and a myriad of support services. The presence of a representative from your company within a short drive and/or local call gives you the "home court" advantage in selling.

Manufacturers' representative organizations appreciate and encourage the creation of opportunities developed by manufacturers' advertising and marketing programs. Leads are followed, and marketing support is provided by your reps.

**Long-Term Stability:** Manufacturers' representatives are entrepreneurial. The representative firm is a structured entity. Today, the average representative firm has been in business 18 years. Your representatives are here to stay. Reps have a big investment in their business and their territory. In fact, their biggest asset is their customer base. Your company gets the benefit of that investment and commitment.

**Representatives Invest in Your Territory:** For manufacturers who require more than one person in each territory, the representative firm hires and trains good people. The manufacturers' representative has the advantage of multiple lines and can afford better people and more training investment because it is split among multiple sources of income. Today's manufacturers' representative firm invests about 60 percent of all income in personnel. They hire technically qualified, career oriented, strongly motivated people to represent your company. Representatives invest time and money to build a future for your company and their firms.

**The Myth of Control:** Sometimes companies prefer to hire their own sales force because they feel they get more "control." The manufacturer who selects the best representative firms, however, and who supports and manages those firms in a professional manner, gets more "control" than when the salespeople are direct employees.

The manufacturers' representative depends on the manufacturer for product and promotion. This interdependent relationship gives the manufacturer the desired control. To substantiate this fact, in many industries a large number of manufacturers with sales of more than \$50 million are committed to their manufacturers' representative firms.

**The Ultimate Motivation:** Manufacturers representatives have the ultimate motivation: NO SALES, NO COMMISSIONS!