



The Professional
Sales Force

Professional Sales Representative Organization
The organization that makes a difference

What we would like you to know... March 20, 2014

IPRO

Summit

TECHNOLOGY & BUSINESS SUMMIT

The Summit is a cooperative effort among multiple Independent Representative firms and is a business development event to benefit integrators and exhibitors, regardless of the size of the company.



From the event organizer Mark Chikowski, "A huge component to the success of the Summit is the cooperative nature of the event. Integrators, Reps, Exhibitors, and Industry Associates all getting together in an interactive environment on a local level has proven to be a formula that works. This truly is a mutually beneficial event that has value for everyone."

The focuses of the Summit are a combination of high quality education on an industry-wide level AND the highlighting of the newest and most cutting-edge products from the exhibitors involved. Factory staff will man the exhibits, and formal education partners will include CEDIA and

IPRO members who will offer higher levels of instruction and cooperative education.

In 2014, Summit events are currently scheduled as follows:

April 17	Arizona Summit, Phoenix
May 13 & 15	So.Cal Summit, Los Angeles and Orange County
May 21	Great Lakes Summit, Lansing MI
June 3 & 5	Florida Summit, Orlando and Ft Lauderdale

Plan to attend now!

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Newly-Found Regard



By Steve Zaboji, President, Balaton Marketing, Inc.

Recent business and vacation travel took me to the Las Vegas and Salt Lake City areas. Wilson Electronics is located in this vicinity in St. George, Utah, and as it is one of our lines, it seemed an appropriate opportunity to visit the Wilson factory while there.

Wilson Electronics is a nearly 40-year-old company that was formerly heavily invested in the two-way communication business (for example, CB radios). Then some years ago Wilson shed most of that core business in order to concentrate on the evolving cellular industry. Fast forward to today, and it is clear that it is the most prominent manufacturer in the cellular signal boosters industry, maintaining nearly 80% of the market share.

Blake Seese, Devon Ferguson and other tech-support personnel gave me a warm welcome, and then our first order of business was a comprehensive tour of the factory where 250 employees administer, develop, engineer, manufacture, test, service and support Cellular Signal Amplifiers and related accessories. Wilson Electronics is an impressive facility, to say the least!



Pictured above is one of the production lines at the Utah facility.



All Wilson products are 100% quality control checked.

The tour was followed by an introduction to the key marketing and direct sales personnel, and I had an opportunity to present the needs and viewpoints of an independent sales representative.

As you might already know, Wilson Electronics made a strategic decision to enter the CI segment of consumer electronics. Since they only had a limited direct sales force, they reached out to IPRO and embarked on a mission to engage independent sales organizations in every territory in the US market. Now, every territory is represented by an IPRO-affiliated sales organization. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to collectively show our relevance in the development of Wilson Electronics sales. Enough said.

I spent the better part of five hours in fairly intense discussions from which I came away with a number of **takeaways**:

- Wilson Electronics is a leader and a substantial company in a very significant industry (cellular).
- Wilson products are solutions to problems (which many cellular users experience but for which they don't know that effective resolutions exist).
- The **President & CEO (Robert Van Buskirk) and Managing Director Strategic Market Development (Joe Banos)** are in favor of the sales representative model. They are interested in how we function and do our jobs, and they want to support our efforts in any way possible.
- It is essential that we all regularly communicate with our key contacts at Wilson. In my experience, they seek, respect and value our input.
- Wilson Electronics can be reached in under a two-hour drive from Las Vegas. If you are ever close to their facility, I highly recommend that you stop by and spend some valuable time with Wilson management and support personnel.
- Other key sales and marketing managers whom I met and who share an enthusiasm for the independent sales force were Jonathon Bacon, Chris Rutherford and Laine Matthews.

Most importantly, Wilson stands out as an incredible business opportunity for all of Wilson's IPRO-affiliated sales organizations, and we should all do our best to make it very successful in our respective areas. Further, Balaton publishes a weekly newsletter called the Virtual Representative, and the reaction to the Wilson Electronics articles in our recent publications have been very positive and encouraging, underscoring the idea that the cellular signal booster business is big!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you might have about my Wilson visit at: 571-228-3420.

Good Selling!

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Rep Commissions

The question: "Is 10% the new representative's minimum wage?"

What is happening:

1. Manufacturers find it very difficult now to hire the best representatives.
2. Representatives are extremely protective of time and current principals.
3. Rising business costs force reps to have more lines than they really want.
4. Representatives cannot afford to pioneer new lines.
5. Short term contracts and lower commissions are ignored.
6. Partnership with customers and principals is the huge priority.

The problem: We all know the economic stresses of the past years, and we have seen many reactive moves and decisions to cope. Some of these decisions have in the past destroyed the viability of a few quality manufacturers, as well as representatives and customers (and will also do so in the future).

The constant: **Nothing happens until someone sells something**, and obviously selling that something must create adequate cash flow and profit for all parties to provide mutual and continuing support. The challenge is to bridge the gap and to gain understanding that those parties need.

We once sat with a man whom we knew to be a multi-billionaire, and he was asked, "What is your job?" His reply was, "My job is to be sure that we spend less money than we take in." We can all learn from him.





Representative Soldiers in the Field

By Steve Zaboji, President, Balaton Marketing, Inc.

Sales representatives generally do their work quietly in an area that traverses the needs of both dealers and manufacturers. Often their work is unheralded and unrecognized by those whom they serve.

A few weeks ago I was privileged to be on a copy list of an email that was sent to a small group of industry friends of [Keith Halpern](#), president of AMI Sales in Hollywood, Florida. In the email, Keith had written a poignant acknowledgement of one of his associates/employees, Ray Miller.

Keith's letter struck me as unusual, because in so many instances front line sales representatives do not receive the accolades that they deserve. While AMI Sales is not

an IPRO member, its function, quality and relevance shadow those firms that serve within IPRO.

I called Keith and asked his permission to share his tribute with the IPRO community, as it is one that touches our manufacturers and nearly 100 independent sales firms. Interestingly, after Keith sent it out it went viral, and the congratulations, thanks and "**attaboys**" came pouring in.

Keith's email:

Today marks the 25th anniversary of the day that Ray Miller burst upon the scene at AMI Sales. Things haven't been the same since. In the words of Jerry Garcia (the leader of the Grateful Dead, for those of you who are unaware of the 60s), "What a long strange trip it's been."

Ray brought a unique talent to our group that nobody had ever seen before. His technical capabilities are second-to-none, and his ability to relate to people is unsurpassed. Of course, his tenure has not been without challenges. He has forced me to become ambidextrous so that I could pat him on the back with one hand while choking him with the other! He has also forced me to rethink the concept of time management.

For those of you who have had the thrill of driving with him, need I say more? And for those of you who have found themselves in an impossible jam with no way out, and if you were fortunate enough to call the Mr. Wizard Hotline (which doesn't always answer) and got help from Ray, you are lucky indeed. MacGyver actually lives! After 25 years of this stuff, I am still taken aback at the amount of knowledge that is stuffed into that brain! There seems to be no problem that Ray can't figure out.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work beside Ray for the past 25 years and to call him my friend as well as my colleague! It has also been a great deal of fun. Please join me in acknowledging this unique individual who has made all of our lives more interesting!

Keith, on behalf of IPRO, thank you for publicly sharing your appreciation for Ray's contribution to your firm. Our gratitude and kudos go out to Ray Miller and all like him who serve our industry!

Joining IPRO

Our last newsletter produced a good number of inquiries from both Representatives and Manufacturers asking how to join IPRO. We appreciate your questions, and we say, "Thank You" to those who are joining. IPRO provides a unique forum to merge the talents and skills of both roles so that both can do more business.

Lewis Schiff has stated that we all focus on technical skills in order to succeed but that we should also recognize that those skills can be hired. The most successful in the business world build strong teams and focus on effective relationships, recognizing that the "know how" is good.

Even better than that is the "knowing who." Very successful people have very strong relationships with just a few

strong partners. IPRO supports those talented manufacturers and sales groups who are focused on success, who create strong relationships, and who continually seek efficiency and effectiveness.

Those who have questions and who are considering joining IPRO can gain information from www.avreps.org and by calling 800-420-4268.



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Mark Your Calendar

Frank Culotta, IPRO's Conference Committee Chairman, has announced that the 2014 IPRO Education and Business Conference will be held this fall in Scottsdale, Arizona. Please mark your calendar and join us on October 28, 29, and 30.

"We have chosen the Talking Stick Casino and Resort," stated Frank, "as a location suited for the experience we wish for our representatives and manufacturers. It is a beautiful, pleasant and modern facility that will be

conducive to our goals."

The IPRO Conference is a unique opportunity for representatives and manufacturers to merge their unique assets and skills so that quality customer service produces increased business for all concerned.

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