



The Professional  
Sales Force

## Professional Sales Representative Organization

*The organization that makes a difference*

What we would like you to know... March 14, 2013

IPRO



### David Labuskes, New InfoComm CEO

Pictured here: David Labuskes, CTS, RCDD

*For more than 13 years, David Labuskes served as Vice President of RTKL, now a division of ARCADIS, one of the world's leading architectural and engineering firms. He is the founder of the company's Technology Design Practice, overseeing the delivery of audio-visual, voice, data, wireless, environmental media, electronic security and acoustics services. Responsible for the operational, financial and marketing of technical services around the world, he has led projects in the corporate, government, commercial and healthcare spaces.*

*Prior to joining RTKL, Labuskes served as President and CEO of Premier Technology services, a software and systems design consulting firm. Previously he was Executive Vice President of Accelerated Payment Systems, an electronic payments processing firm. He holds a B.A. in International Politics from Penn State University and an MBA from Loyola University of Maryland.*

Ron DeVoe, IPRO's current Commercial Director and former BOG member and IRC chairman, had the following important exchange with David recently regarding David's appointment as the new Executive Director/CEO of InfoComm, the trade association representing the commercial audio-visual industry worldwide:

**RD: David, on behalf of the Independent Representative Council and IPRO, we would like to welcome you to InfoComm. Your experience and knowledge of emerging markets and converging technologies will be extremely valuable to InfoComm. Getting to my first question, InfoComm is no longer just identified as an AV Association. How do you see that evolution continuing?**

DL: I see an ever expanding use of technology in the conduct of business, government and healthcare. In every case where a human being is interfacing with that technology, there is AV. Be it in a board room, a command center or an operating suite, we are increasingly dependent on information that is delivered to us through technology. I don't see that InfoComm is less associated with AV. What I see is an ever-changing definition of AV. The systems, controls, and capabilities being designed, installed, and yes, represented, would never have been imagined 10 years ago. I'm sure that we are unable to imagine that which will come into reality in the coming decade as well. What I do know is that there will be a continued need for those devices and systems to interact with the eyes and ears of humanity. And making that interaction exceptional will require a professional with skills and knowledge that at the core are those possessed by an AV professional.

**RD: During your time at RTKL, did you have any interface with Independent Rep organizations? If so, what service did they provide?**

DL: I did. We worked with many Independent Representatives. They were a source of information on products for the manufacturers that they were associated with. They were also an important source of knowledge about the overall industry, as they had interactions with most of the participants in the value-chain. Of course they worked with the manufacturers, but they also spoke with distributors, dealers, integrators and other consultants, as well as end-users. This type of context made them valuable with regards to understanding the overall "temperature" of the industry within the region that they worked.

**RD: According to a recent report, independent reps and other service providers make up 6% of**

**InfoComm. With such a small percentage of the overall makeup of InfoComm, how can rep organizations have any visibility or impact within this ever changing industry?**

DL: I guess I'd point you to the answer above. I don't think the percentage of membership that is held by a certain constituency of InfoComm is a criteria that we use in our efforts to help our members be more successful in their business. Each participant and each member has an opportunity to impact the industry, and I see it as InfoComm's responsibility to work with those members to help them be more successful in their business. We do this with education and certification and networking opportunities and so many other programs that reinforce the exhibitions that we now hold around the world. I believe that we all have the ability to have impact based on our willingness, not on our numbers.

**RD: There are many rep organizations who attend InfoComm but who are not members. When quizzed, they cite the cost of dues and the limited value proposition offered to rep organizations by InfoComm. Can you suggest some benefits that reps do receive from InfoComm?**

DL: Well, first of all, we've dramatically restructured the membership structure and cost to join for members. We've dropped from 10's of categories of membership to 2 – member and affiliate. The annual membership fee for these is \$500 and \$150 each (you can visit [infoComm.org/additup](http://infoComm.org/additup) for more information). It's hard to imagine that a rep firm wouldn't be able to gain value from that investment. Out of the gate, being an InfoComm member carries a clear commitment to the industry as a message. Supporting InfoComm helps us to continue our efforts in attracting new manufacturers to our industry that will need reps to represent their products. The training that we provide to the industry will result in a better trained dealer and integrator network, and this helps sell and support products that the reps carry. The InfoComm show is the most important gathering for dealers, consultants, and other industry groups. New product introductions, industry training, and networking opportunities abound. I frankly can't imagine why any firm in the AV industry would not be a member of InfoComm. Of course, I'm biased!

**RD: Can you suggest ways that independent rep firms can do more for InfoComm?**

DL: Get involved! At our core and roots, we are an industry association. We will be celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. That is extraordinary, especially in the realm of technology and industry associations. Our organization today differs in many ways from what it was 75 years ago, but in some ways continues with a consistent foundation. That foundation is one whereby we as industry participants agreed that we could work together toward the betterment of all of us. This doesn't interfere with competition, nor will we ever be in support of anything that did. But what it does do is provide an environment in which we can mentor new individuals entering the industry and work toward attracting new talent. Independent representatives should attend the shows of course but they can do more. They can sponsor programs and activities around AV Week. They can attend or even sponsor regional roundtables. They can contribute on committees. It's about aligning your business interests with your passions and finding a way to help this great industry become better. InfoComm can be a conduit for those efforts.

**RD: In the last few years, principals of independent reps firms have served on the board of governors, attended leadership conferences, participated in regional roundtables and have been included in InfoComm 100 activities. Will the independent reps still be considered in leadership positions in the future?**

DL: I believe that the success of InfoComm can be attributed most directly to two factors: the quality of our governance and the quality of our professional staff. The former provides strategic direction, vision and insight, and the latter works tirelessly every day to implement those strategies and measure the successes (and failures) of our efforts to remain relevant, create value and help our membership. I see no reason why independent rep firms can't or shouldn't participate in this effort as actively as they wish. There are open nominations to our Board, and the election of new Board members takes place in a general election by our membership. Of course, if the firms aren't members, then they can't vote. And if you can't or don't vote, then, as we all know, you give up your opportunity to participate. We are always looking first for a Director that has both the vision and the industry experience to help InfoComm continue its success. Why would anyone suggest that individuals with those attributes aren't found in the Independent Representative firms? Of course they'll be considered.

**RD: Thank you David. Do you have any other comments for the reps?**

DL: Just "thank you" for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I am consistently humbled by the legacy of accomplishment that precedes me at InfoComm. I am committed to do my best to elevate the association and the industry with a continued focus on all of the participants in the AV industry. It is my expectation that we will continue to grow and strengthen as a part of the larger economy. The independent representative will continue to have a role in that success.

**Ron's Note: We are very grateful to David for his time and input and are fortunate to have his**

*experience and understanding as he assumes his role with InfoComm. He has offered us excellent advice about commitment, involvement and adding value in order to receive value. Putting his advice into action will be beneficial to us all.*

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## IPRO Communications

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