



Steve Grossman, CPMR

## Time to adjust your sail

by **Steve Grossman, CPMR**  
*GM Partners*

IHRA Founding President and Delegate to MRERF

**H**ere we are at Memorial Day and the year keeps moving along - and - as professional reps we must meet the challenges. As I have said before, I have a plaque on the wall in my office that says: *“You cannot change the wind, but you can adjust your sail.”* Well, as successful reps, that is what we do, even though adjusting to change is not easy. But, we adjust and survive and make it better.

As you know, I am a believer in continuing education to learn how to work smarter and more effectively, because I’m not sure I can work any harder. So, on Sunday, May 31, I am off to **MANAfest ‘09** in Las Vegas. (I know if you are reading this you have received many

Continued on page 3 >>>>

## Sa1esWise™

## Be unattached to the outcome, and have faith in the future

by **Nicki Weiss**, *Certified Professional Sales  
Management Coach and Master Trainer*



**B**oth of my sons are teenagers. This means that I, by definition, am an incompetent. They frequently think I’m an idiot, that I often have unrealistic expectations of how they should act (loving, respectful, good grades, physically active), and that what they’re up to is none of my business. It’s hard being a parent of teenagers, especially for someone like me, who is naturally nosy and bossy. I regularly worry about the quality of their friendships and their personal safety.

Whenever I need to figure something out, I grab a pen and paper and start writing random thoughts about the quandary at hand. Among my scribbles about parenting and teenagers, I found myself writing “You need to be unattached.” I wasn’t quite sure what “unattached” means, so I looked it up.

*Unattached (adj.) - 1. not joined, especially to surrounding tissue; 2. not committed to or dependent on another person or group; 3. independent; 4. available.*

I love this notion. There’s a certain freedom in not making my sons’ issues my issues, not being dependent on them to define my worth and success as a parent, yet still being available for support. To me, “unattached” means being caring and compassionate, yet also keeping in mind that my sons are on the long, hard road to maturity. This is their road, not mine. Being stuck in the potholes with them is too exhausting and doesn’t help them grow up. I need to let them know I’m sure they can make good decisions, and then give them the space to learn to drive.

What does this have to do with business? Picking up my pen again, I wrote down what happened to me last week.

Continued on page 2 >>>>

### June 2009

IHRA Member Feature Article.....	Page 4
Tech Bits.....	Page 5
Three (3) Lines Available this month .....	Page 7
Industry Show Calendar.....	Page 9



## Weiss (continued from page 1)

- An \$80,000 project went away. Perhaps it will morph into something smaller later this year.
- A \$30,000 project is on hold - indefinitely.
- A \$17,000 project died.

In my world, all of these projects are significant, so I was surprised at my reaction: “Oh well.” That’s \$127,000 of revenue that I was counting on, and all I can write down is, “Oh well?”

In the past, I would have gotten scared, anxious and been stuck in a funk. I would have spiralled into thinking that no one likes me (my usual version of hell) and that I would continue to lose business. But this time I didn’t. I was unattached to the outcome. I was disappointed, for sure, but not distraught. Why? I kept writing ...

**Unattached to the outcome, faith in the future.** It seems like a paradox to be unattached to the outcome when there are numbers to make, new doors to open, people to manage, bills to pay, payroll to meet and business to conduct.

**It’s about unhooking wanting from getting.** It just makes sense to me that even though some projects aren’t going forward, if I stay open, meet new people, notice opportunities, serve my clients well, stay curious, hone my skills and business acumen, practice gratitude and stay optimistic, business will continue to come my way.

**We are not puppets nor captains of destiny.** Destiny is a relationship. It is a play among invisible hands, divine grace, synchronicity, whatever you want to call the Force that is bigger than you, and your own effort. Half of it you cannot control; half of it is absolutely in your hands. We are neither entirely a puppet of the gods, nor entirely the captains of our own destiny. We’re a little of both.

There is so much about my fate that I cannot control, but other things do fall under my jurisdiction. I can decide how I spend my time and with whom, how I interact, how I market, how I sell, how I converse, and who I collaborate with. I can decide how to respond to disappointment.

Currently, I’m enjoying my business despite the curve balls. All my eggs weren’t in those three baskets. Sure, they would have been nice eggs to hatch, but the fact that they’re not going to happen will not ruin me. In fact, I’m confident that something else will show up in their place.

**Unattached and practicing gratitude go together.** When that \$127,000 worth of business went poof, it helped me to look at what is working. Here’s what I wrote down:

- My business is busy.
- Some people are, in fact, saying yes to me.
- My husband’s business is doing well.
- I work with a coach who’s looking out for me.
- I feel good about the work that I do.
- I love my customers. Really, there’s not one jerk in the bunch.
- I collaborate and network with wonderful people.
- I have a few stretch goals on the horizon, and working towards them makes me happy.

Even if you’re struggling in your business right now, you have a lot to be grateful for. Practicing gratitude will help you turn into the skid the next time you hit an icy patch.

**Talk back:** I’d love to hear your experiences of learning how to “unattach” and what that attitude has done for your business and your life.

*Nicki Weiss is an internationally recognized Certified Professional Sales Management Coach, Master Trainer and workshop leader. Since 1992, Nicki has trained, certified, and/or coached more than 6,000 business executives, manufacturers’ reps, corporate sales executives, small to medium size entrepreneurial business leaders, and sales teams of all shapes and sizes.*

*Nicki guarantees increased sales performance when rep firm sales managers become better sales coaches and all rep personnel become more customer focused. For powerful tips and techniques, sign up for her FREE monthly e-zine, Sa1esWise™, at [www.saleswise.ca](http://www.saleswise.ca). You can call Nicki at 416-778-4145 or send e-mail to: [nicki@saleswise.ca](mailto:nicki@saleswise.ca).*

This article is reprinted, with permission, from the Spring 2009 issue of The Representor, a publication of the Electronics Representatives Association

## IHRA Members: Want to reduce or eliminate your 2010 IHRA dues? You can with the our *extended* 2009 Housewares Show Special Promo

### *Be a new-member sponsor*

For every new IHRA member (rep or manufacturer) you sponsor through the end of June 2009, you will receive a \$50 reduction in your 2010 dues.

### **Sponsor four (4) and your 2010 dues are FREE!**

IHRA membership is an easy sell. First-time members and those that have not been members for 4 or more years pay only \$122.50 for membership through the 2010 Housewares Show. We call that first year "A Taste of IHRA."

As most of you know, once you have tasted IHRA, you'll keep coming back for more helpings.

**For membership applications and "Reasons to Belong" details, contact us at: [info@ihra.org](mailto:info@ihra.org)**

### **Grossman** (continued from page 1)

eMails and other reminders of this event.) MANAfest '09 is a management and marketing conference produced by our sister rep association, MANA (Manufacturers Agents National Association). The conference offers attendees many programs designed to help run your rep business smarter and more profitably.

As MANA president, **Bryan Shirley**, has said: *"Isn't improving your abilities worth \$1200 (the cost of airfare, registration and hotel)?"*

If your business is similar to ours, a few days out-of-town will not hurt your overall sales this year, and if you pick up one good idea, the conference will more than pay for itself.

I think it was **Woody Allen** who said: "90% of life is showing up." I try to attend major industry shows: Housewares, ADS (twice a year), PET, Hardware, etc. A fellow rep who is in the hardware industry called and suggested I stop and see a line of his because the manufacturer was looking for a representative to call on a specific account. As good fortune would have it, the account buyer stopped at the booth right after we agreed to work together. What makes this so sweet is that this account has a policy of working direct with the manufacturer if the account contacts the factory first. I "showed up" and got the account.

Lastly, one of my accounts has a new policy that a rep cannot sell them similar products from more than one manufacturer they represent. This will create challenges for all reps as more manufacturers expand their lines and/or buy or merge with their competitors. I have checked with IHRA's legal counsel and was told that retailers have a right to this restrictive policy.

So I guess I'll have to continue adjusting my sail.

### **IT'S NOT TOO LATE!**

By the time you receive this newsletter and, hopefully, read this column, MANAfest '09 will be starting in one or two days. Airlines are looking for business. You can probably get a seat at a very low fare. Come on, invest in your future and join IHRA members **Kent Kulovitz, Mark Glotter, Donna Peake, Don Blunt, me and Myra & Bill Weiner** at the Green Valley Resort. Complete information is at: <http://www.manafestconference.org>

**Steve Grossman, CPMR, IHRA and MANA Member: [steman4@aol.com](mailto:steman4@aol.com)**

*This is one of an occasional article about an IHRA member firm. IHRA member firms are invited to submit articles for possible publication in the REPorter.*

## **Buying American Has Never Been A Better Sales Tool**

by Seth Lapine, *David S. Lapine, Inc.*, Stamford, CT

**Y**esterday, a Lapine Sales Associate was at a meeting with one of our largest retail customers. A few weeks earlier a buying team from this customer had accompanied our sales associate on a factory visit to one of our manufacturers. In following up on this visit yesterday the senior merchandize manager went out of his way to express to our sales associate how this visit had greatly changed his perspective about this factory and our business with them.

Now Mark Lapine (our Chairman) is fond of saying that, “there’s no such thing as a bad factory visit.” Indeed we at the Lapine Company are fortunate enough to represent some truly spectacular manufacturers and anytime we’re able to bring our customers to visit one of them it has improved our relationships on both sides. But what struck me about this buyer’s comments was not his pleasure with the manufacturer’s hospitality or the impressive nature of their manufacturing facilities and efficiencies, what struck me was the buyer’s pleasure at witnessing the best of American manufacturing.

This buyer made note of the fact that in recent years, visits to American manufacturing facilities have been rare. He was impressed with what he saw, but more importantly proud that these were Americans at work producing goods for his stores and that he was helping to keep U.S. workers employed. This is no small observation!

In a time where our economy has faced nearly unprecedented struggles and Americans are facing growing unemployment, recognizing the total value of American manufacturing is something more buyers need to do and I believe (as with this buyer) we can help them. We are fortunate to represent a number of manufacturers that have steadfastly maintained their “Made in the U.S.A” pedigree. It’s time we made a bigger deal out of this!

### **WHY BUY AMERICAN?**

Foreign produced products, while often inexpensive have long held the stigma of being “cheap.” While Asia has provided an environment where goods could be produced at less expense, quality, lead-times, and innovation have continued to present manufacturing challenges. In our current environment where much of the Asia advantage in price has been lost the tides are turning.

Buying American typically means shorter lead times and greater production flexibility. American products are also quality products and in a time where every penny is precious, consumers want to know that when they do spend their money, it’s being spent on goods that are going to last. Finally, American products mean U.S. employees. Keeping American’s employed in these difficult times is important for our customers morally and economically... remember, American’s with jobs are U.S. consumers who spend money. Buying American is to everyone’s advantage!

### **WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?**

As I noted earlier, we are truly fortunate to represent some great American manufacturers. “American Made” has never been a more powerful sales tool and now is the time to ply it! I’ve asked each of my sales associates to make this sales pitch a part of their lives and make these domestic lines and “Made in the U.S.A.” products a priority for their customers. If you have lines that are made in America, then my advice to you is don’t wait until your next meeting! Call your buyers now and let them know that more than a significant market trend, you have an important message that will resonate with their management, improve their brand image, and speak to their consumers. Most of all, you have a way to help them keep American’s employed and create consumers for their stores.

***Now, let’s go sell something!***



Left to right, back:  
Paul Lapin, Noah Lapine  
front: Mark Lapine, Seth Lapine

## Here's a continuing feature in IHRA's *REPorter* newsletter: "Tech Bits"

*Gregg Marshall, CPMR, CSP, is a speaker, author and consultant. He can be reached by e-mail at [gmarshall@reconnection.com](mailto:gmarshall@reconnection.com), or visit his website at <http://www.reconnection.com>.*



### **Tech Bit 14**

#### **Clean Up Your Hard Drive for More Speed**

Is your computer getting slower? I've often thought that Microsoft and Intel have conspired to slow computers down over time so you'll buy a new one every year.

Actually as you use your computer, install new programs and get updates, your computer develops what I call plaque, just like your teeth.

So it's time to "brush" your computer.

Start by getting rid of all the "bloatware" that came with your computer. The easiest solution to that is PC Decrapifier (yes that's its name, it's at <http://www.pcdecrapifier.com/>).

Then uninstall all those neat programs you might have decided to try and never use. Go to your control panel and choose Add/Remove Programs (XP) or Programs And Features (Vista).

If you don't know what's on your PC, try WinAudit (<http://www.pxserver.com/winaudit.htm>), a great utility for generating a comprehensive report of everything about your computer.

After cleaning off all the extraneous programs, do a disk defragmentation. You can use Windows defragmenter by going to Start then My Computer and right clicking on the C drive. From the context menu that pops up, select properties, then tools. Do a disk clean up first, then do a defragment. Another option is to use Diskkeeper (<http://www.diskkeeper.com/defrag.asp>) that automatically defragments your disk in the background. My favorite is Disktrix' Ultimate Defrag (<http://www.disktrix.com>), which not only defragments your hard drive, it moves frequently used files to the same area to keep the seek time to a minimum.

That will clean up your hard drive, next time we clean the Windows.

### **Tech Bit 15**

#### **Eliminate Unnecessary Start Up Programs**

You cleaned out the closet you call your hard drive, now its time to clean the Windows to speed up your computer.

It seems that every program recently has decided it's a good idea to install an automatic update program that sits in memory all the time, running and checking for that update that comes out once every month or two.

Most of those same programs also check for updates when you start the program, so why do you need that update "right now?"

Or they think you need the convenience of being able to start them from the

system tray (lower right corner), the quick-start tray (lower left corner), the desktop and the start menu. Really, do you need that program that much?

Cleaning your windows can be done via the MSCONFIG program (go to your Start menu, click on Run, and type MSCONFIG). Go to the Startup tab and uncheck boxes of programs you don't really need (just don't turn off your antivirus program). It's not permanent, so if you mess up, you can go back and re-check that box.

Or you can use a commercial program like System Mechanic (<http://www.iolo.com>). It will guide you through removing extra programs, files and other bloat that your system builds up over time.

### **Tech Bit 16**

#### **Speed Up That PC, Add RAM**

You've optimized your hard drive, deleted all the extraneous stuff in your registry and minimized the number of start up programs, yet your computer still seems sluggish.

Before going out and buying a new one, there are a couple of things left to try (one even works if you do buy a new computer).

If your current computer is running Vista, and you can get the drivers for your system for XP, one option is to "downgrade" to Windows XP. It uses fewer resources (processor and memory) than Vista and for most people it has all the features they'll need. The biggest problem with downgrading is you need to re-install all your applications and put your data back...

If you are already running XP, or are stuck with Vista, the next best option is more RAM memory. Doubling the amount of memory in a PC or notebook from 1 gigabyte to 2 gigabytes will often give a 20-25% improvement in speed. You can get a feeling for how much improvement you will get by watching the hard disk light on your system. If it is always on, Windows is using it like memory and adding more RAM will help.

The good news is more RAM is relatively inexpensive. You should be able to get 1 gigabyte of RAM for either a desktop or notebook for under \$25 on sale, I've seen 2 gigabytes for that, but it is more uncommon. More memory is something you should watch Spoofee (<http://www.spoofee.com>) for. Sometime in any 30-45 day period you'll see several RAM specials listed. Just make sure you get the same speed as your system requires (e.g. PC2700 DDR memory absolutely won't work in a system that requires PC5300 DDR2 memory).

There is a point of diminishing returns, but generally more memory means faster.

## Opportunities to make you and your staff better at what you do for a living

*One of the most important challenges of IHRA's mission is providing educational opportunities for our members and their staffs that make them better at what they do as multiple-line, field sales professionals. We will keep you posted on these opportunities and encourage participation whenever and wherever possible.*

**IHRA** and more than 30 other representative associations support the **Manufacturers' Representatives Educational Research Foundation (MRERF)**, a charitable, education foundation.

The Foundation is dedicated to:

- \* Raising awareness of the independent multiple-line selling organization
- \* Providing professional education for the representative community
- \* Funding research concerning the representative function of business
- \* Providing information on the value of the function to the marketplace

The MRERF Education Program provides educational opportunities through certification, sales training, and continuing education programs. The Foundation also prepares educational materials, and publishes resource material and periodic reports concerning the representative function. All information generated by MRERF is available to both the academic and business communities.

MRERF's educational subsidiary, the Institute for Professional Advancement (IPA), is the credentialing organization for all designations. Their education programs have two distinct, yet synergistic, focus areas: Consultative Selling and Rep Firm Management. Program graduates receive the Certified Professional Manufacturers Representative (CPMR) or Certified Sales Professional (CSP) designation. Their research spotlights understanding and improving the representative function.

**Certified Professional Manufacturers Representative (CPMR)** is for anyone providing outsourced sales functions to manufacturers, regardless of industry. It is a professional designation earned by an individual, not a firm.

The CPMR program is executive education for firm owners and managers. Participants invest one week annually for three years on campus at Arizona State University. Attendees gain knowledge and insight into operating a business more effectively and profitably.

During the three years of CPMR programming, designation participants create an international network of colleagues with a common body of knowledge and mutual ethical standards. Reaching beyond a single industry and across the profession, the CPMR designation identifies individuals that are committed to being on the leading edge.

## Calendar for CPMR

### CPMR 2010: January 9-14

Be ready for five days of intense instruction, interaction and reflection. You will return to the office with a To-Do List chock full of ideas for improving your business.

Tuition is \$1,345 for IHRA members and \$1,845.00 for non-members. This includes classroom instruction, final exam, course and study materials, coffee breaks, and one programmed reception and meal. Not included are lodging, meals except as noted, or transportation.

All classes are held at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. After you apply, you will be mailed an information packet including hotel information.

Arrive in Phoenix Saturday for evening check in. Depart Thursday after the written exam. Exam begins at 8am, and takes up to four hours.

**The Certified Sales Professional (CSP)** program gives a thorough understanding of consultative selling. From business creation to improved time and territory management; goal-setting to prospecting, and everything in between, attendees return to the territory with a renewed enthusiasm for selling.

Regardless of industry or place in the sales channel, you want CSP. Anyone calling on customers will find great value in the program. Three days of instruction, interaction and role-play will energize you and increase productivity and profitability.

As a sales professional, you are faced with knowledgeable, demanding buyers. Buyers expect a salesperson to be well-informed, able to demonstrate expertise in their products, and show professionalism. CSP graduates do just that.

A salesperson needs to provide value – not only in the products and services they are selling, but in the relationships they have established.

### Upcoming CSP Sessions in 2009:

June 9 - 12	Minneapolis, MN
September 15 - 18	Raleigh, NC
October 6 - 9	Chicago, IL
October 27 - 30	St. Louis, MO

Tuition is \$1,395 for IHRA members. Fee includes program, all teaching materials, certification registration including oral exam, lunch and certificate of course completion. Classes run Tuesday through Thursday, 8:00am to 5:00pm, with breaks and lunch. These classes fill up fast. Reserve space, NOW!

**Complete information about MRERF Programs - including "Managing Your Manufacturers Representatives Network (MMRN)" . . . a program specifically designed for manufacturers who utilize, or want to utilize field sales professionals to bring their products and programs to market . . . available at: [www.mrerf.org](http://www.mrerf.org)**

## Manufacturers Seeking IHRA Field Sales Professionals

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www.jellygear.com

**Contact:** Kathy Pancila, VP Sales  
**eMail:** kpancila@jellygear.com

**Territories:** U.S.A., Canada, Mexico

**Commission Rate:** TBD

**Years in Business:** 60

**Channels currently sold:** Through direct factory sales to wholesalers and/or other manufacturers

**Seeking Sales Through:** Reps selling to Retailers

**Products:** we are a manufacturer / importer / marketing company that specializes in selling unique giftware products. Right now we have an extremely hot unique product and we are looking for reps that call on small gift / novelty stores.

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14000 Military Trail, Suite 204B  
Delray Beach FL 33071  
(800) 471-1367

**Contact:** Robert Schmeizer, President  
**eMail:** csbprez@csbcommodities.com

**Territories:** Midwest & East Coast

**Nat'l Sales:** \$10,000,000

**Commission Rate:** 5-10%

**Years in Business:** 33

**Channels currently sold:** Gift / Novelty / Specialty / Premium Stores; On-Line Retailers

**Seeking Sales Through:** Gift / Novelty / Specialty Stores - and - Target, Home Depot, Lowe's, Best Buy

**Products:** Thermometers: Meat, Fridge/Freezer, Oven/Grill, Candy/Deep Fry; Digital Spoon Scale, Digital BBQ Tong, Digital Pasta Timer, Twist-Powered Flashlights.

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**Contact:** Eric M. Halberg, General Manager  
**eMail:** ehalberg@gmail.com

**Territories:** U.S.A., Canada, Mexico

**Commission Rate:** 5% Domestic; 3% DI

**Years in Business:** 15     **Sales:** \$80,000,000

**Channels currently sold:** Retail, Hardware, Premium

**Seeking Sales Through:** As above + MANY Key Accounts Still Available: Wal-Mart, Lowes, Home Depot, Ace, True Value, BB&B, Macy's, etc.

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**June**

25 - 29  
Dallas International Lighting Market  
Dallas TX

28 - July 1  
NACDS Marketplace  
San Diego CA

**August**

8 - 10  
Gourmet Housewares Show  
San Francisco CA

**September**

14 - 17  
Las Vegas Market  
Las Vegas NV

**October**

13 - 16  
New York Tabletop Market  
New York NY

14 - 17  
Las Vegas Furniture Market  
Las Vegas NV

17 - 22  
International Home Furnishings Market  
High Point NC



August 8 - 10, 2009  
Moscone Convention Center  
San Francisco, California

international  
home + housewares  
show 2010

Sunday - Tuesday March 14 - 16  
McCormick Place, Chicago, Illinois

**IHRA MEMBERS:**

**Want to know more about RepCare group insurance?**

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**Call PAT BROWN** at 800-854-4636 if your business is in:

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1755 Lake Cook Rd • Suite 118 • Highland Park IL 60035

(847) 607-8912 • (800) 315-7430 • Fax (847) 607-8559

eMail: info@ihra.org • Web: www.ihra.org

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