

PTRA

LOOKS TO THE FUTURE



The Power-Motion Technology Representatives Association Annual Conference will bring about 40 manufacturers to Charleston for informational presentations and networking (Courtesy of PTRA).

Southern hospitality may not be the focus, but the Power-Motion Technology Representatives Association (PTRA) will experience just that and more at its 38th annual conference in Charleston, SC. Members will explore the theme of “Impacting the Future” through educational presentations and amidst networking opportunities, intimate social events and the annual golf tournament.

The PTRA is an association of independent manufacturers’ representatives and manufacturers dedicated to promoting the sales representative’s function in the power transmission and motion control industries. Highlighted presentations include Alan Beaulieu, senior economist for the Institute of Trend Research, discussing “The Recovery—How Long and How Fast;” David Huether, chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers, on “A Manufacturing Resurrection: Prospects for Growth in American Industry;” and David Mayer, vice president of marketing, Kaman Industrial Technologies, who will discuss how Kaman differentiates itself in today’s marketplace and the role manufacturers’ representatives play.

Much of the conference program focuses on general

economic topics, but PTRA aims to have at least one speaker from the industry on the roster. “The general design of the program is to start with a ‘10,000-foot-view,’ Alan Beaulieu from the Institute for Trend Research, followed by Dave Heuther of the NAM and then Dave Mayer from Kaman. Dave Heuther’s presentation will be very relevant to our manufacturer members, although not specific to our industry. Dave Mayer’s presentation will of course be directly relevant to the power transmission and motion control industries,” says Jay Ownby, executive director of the PTRA.

In addition to the presentation program, there are three breakout sessions: “Build Solid Relationships by Backselling to Your Principals,” “Improve Your Microsoft Office Efficiency (A Lot!): Learn to Leverage Time and Technology,” and “Let’s Soar: Actionable Tools to Take You and Your Rep Firm/Principal Relationships to New Heights.” The breakout sessions are typically attended by smaller groups, about 1/3 of the total group; however, they are held at different times, so attendees can attend all of them if they choose. The format tends to be more involved than the other speaker presentations.

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Alan Beaulieu, senior economist for the Institute for Trend Research will discuss “The Recovery—How Long and How Fast.” Attendees will hear from several other speakers and have the opportunity to participate in smaller breakout sessions.

“There is a presentation and Q&A, and there is much more interaction with the smaller groups. Each of these speakers will invite questions at any time,” Ownby says.

According to the 2009 post-conference survey results, breakout sessions were cited as attendees’ favorite part and also something attendees wished more time was devoted to.

“We always conduct a post-conference survey, sometimes at the conference itself, sometimes after. The two most valuable aspects of the conferences are always networking and education,” Ownby says.

Another key feature is the RepMIX, which features a half day of planned, interactive meetings between manufacturers and representatives. Principal members can reserve a booth with chairs and a conference table where they can schedule up to eight 25-minute sessions, or any combination totaling four hours. These meetings can be arranged in advance of the conference.

“Typically around 60 percent of the PTRA membership

attends the conference, which is around 40 manufacturers. Of the 40, 15–20 participate in the RepMIX,” Ownby says.

“The majority of these use the RepMIX to interview reps for open territories; some who don’t have any open territories use it to meet with their reps who are attending the conference.”

Aside from the annual golf tournament, held at Patriots Point Links, where participants will take in views of Charleston Harbor and Fort Sumter across the fairways, PTRA is also running/walking for the South Carolina Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Conference dinners are arranged as “dine-arounds,” in which attendees choose between several restaurant options and dine in groups of eight to 10 instead of less intimate, full group meals. A closing banquet is held for all attendees to conclude the conference.

The PTRA annual conference takes place April 11–14 at the Mills House Hotel in downtown Charleston. For more information, visit www.ptra.org.