



Member's

Corner

**No one else was using the space, so I grabbed it!**

by **Bill Weiner**  
IHRA Executive Director

**H**urricanes, floods, political debates, SBC wrongly (for the 5th time) disconnecting our DSL line, October arriving earlier than usual, the Cubs waiting for next year and plague and pestilence have all combined to provide an opportunity for us (the IHRA staff) to occupy the Member's Corner for this issue



(a slightly younger)  
Bill Weiner

of The REP<sup>®</sup>orter. It's our once every-two-or-three-year chance to say a personal **"thank you"** to the hundreds of IHRA members, including its officers and directors, that have supported our efforts to promote, protect and improve the field sales professional function in the home, housewares and hardware industries.

But, what is a "field sales professional?" At IHRA it is a well-qualified sales agency of performance-committed representatives that represent multiple manufacturers . . . re-presenting those manufacturers' products and programs to wholesale, retail and end-user customers.

In talking with manufacturers seeking representation or advice on working with reps, we are always asked for a profile of our typical member firm. An impossible

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Marketing & PR

**How does your website rate?**

by **Laurence Kaufman**  
*Kaufman Ryan Stral Inc.*  
IHRA Public Relations Consultant



Laurence Kaufman

**I** have just returned from a relatively random tour of the world - rep sites on the World Wide Web. What a downer! With rare exceptions, the manufacturers' representative community has failed to harness the potential of the Internet to serve the (varying) interests of individual firms, nor have very many steered visitors to the information about the rep function on the MRERF site, much less "sold the system" on their own sites.

I find the failure of professional field sales organizations to do any meaningful online selling particularly surprising, because so many reps were quick to embrace the potential of the Web some eight years ago, when it first began proliferating as a communications vehicle. With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the early adopters were stimulated by the attractively low cost of entry enabled by IHRA's early Internet service providers; and although those ISPs are no longer in the IHRA picture, their legacy lingers. It appears as if reps embraced the potential - the question is, has anyone realized the potential?

It's easy to list specific mistakes I saw on my recent tour, but the over-arching missing element seems to be a clear sense of why you have a site in the first place. Too many reps appear to have gone online without knowing why. Even if your site is only what commentator Steve Jackson calls a "glorified poster," you need it to convey the right message about your company. According to Jackson, if your site does nothing else, it needs to establish trust in the mind of your visitor. (Learn more at [www.conversionchronicles.com](http://www.conversionchronicles.com). Although aimed primarily at e-commerce sites [trying to sell something online], those whose sites are e-business can glean a lot of good ideas from here.)

What's your goal for your site, and what are you doing to measure your results as they relate to that goal? Who comprises the primary audience you want your site to reach, and what are you doing to get them to your Web site? Are you after casual surfers - in which case you should be optimizing for search engine pick-up - or are you primarily interested in the prompt and efficient delivery of information to people you already know and whom you send to the site? In my wanderings, I saw only one site making a major effort at providing "backroom efficiency" for exchange of specific, transactional information with principals and customers. That falls within the purview of what I see as the two main goals for a rep Web site: helping customers or acquiring principals. They are not mutually exclusive, but I am inclined

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**Kaufman** (from page 1)

to believe that the best way your site can help you attract new principals is by demonstrating how effectively you serve customers.

Now for seven specific mistakes I saw during my web tour:

1. Amateurish or dated graphics. You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.
2. Non-functional opening page, telling visitors to "enter here." They have already entered in their own minds; why are you making them do so again?
3. Failure to provide convenient or intuitive navigation.
4. Visitor counts. That's nobody's business but yours.
5. "Last update" information that is far in the past. Your visitor will trust the currency of information on an un-dated page a lot more than on a page last updated in 2001.
6. Flash (or other motion) or sound effects, that don't add and only distract.
7. Pages marked "Under construction," or "Coming soon."

How does your site rate? As an IHRA member, you are entitled to an Expert Access consultation at no charge. Just e-mail your URL to me at [lkaufman@bworld.com](mailto:lkaufman@bworld.com), and then call me between 48 and 72 hours later for an honest evaluation of your Web site. But be prepared to tell me what you want your site to accomplish and how you are measuring its performance.

*Laurence Kaufman is chairman of Kaufman Ryan Stral Inc., a marketing communications firm with expertise in consumer products, industrial distribution, electronics and not-for-profit associations, and partner in BigWorld Communications, which designs and maintains Web sites for trade show, Rep firm, association and corporate clients. He also participates in Expert Access, IHRA's telephone consultation program. You can reach Larry Kaufman at 312-467-9494, or fax him at 312-467-0298, or e-mail him at [lkaufman@bworld.com](mailto:lkaufman@bworld.com)*

**Bill Weiner** (from page 1)

task. From firms that have been in business for 50, 60, 70 and almost 90 years, to startups of a year or less, IHRA member firms run the gamut. And, with the median size of firm at 6 employees, we also have members with 100 - 650 employees.

So, what's the profile? Seems to us it's a 6-headed, 20-armed, 36-legged primate with a 30 foot tail. The closest we can come to a profile is a series of snapshots and compilations of the membership. **On pages 3 and 4 of this issue you will find these snapshots.** If you are an IHRA member, see where you fit in. If you are a manufacturer, be assured that an IHRA member firm has the experience, talent and drive to get the job done for your products and programs.

And, one more "thank you" to IHRA's supportive members: The 2005 dues billing was sent out on

September 15. In the first two weeks, almost half of you have paid for 2005. This speedy response will help us keep our yearly dues at the same level they have been for the past 8 years! Very out-of-the-ordinary for any business, but, especially for a professional trade association. If dues had gone up at the same rate as cost-of-living numbers, IHRA dues would have increased \$47. An almost 25% increase.

So . . . keep those checks and credit card payments coming — speedily. We could possibly keep the same dues level for a ninth year. Of course there's another way to help keep the dues level constant: help grow the membership. There are hundreds of field sales professional firms out there that still don't belong to IHRA. You know who they are. If you can't convince them of the reasons to belong, let us know

who they are. We'll try.

Lastly, our apologies for missing our normal publication date. Usually we publish and post The REPorter® no later than the first of each month. If SBC holds to their promise of re-hooking up our DSL line this week, you should receive this no later than Friday, October 8. Of course, the Cubs promised to win the NL pennant, Bush promised to find WMD and a previous president promised "a chicken in every pot and 2 cars in every garage" (or was it 2 chickens in every pot and 1 car . . . or was it everyone would have a pot?). Whatever . . .

Oh, before I forget — be sure your dues payments (if mailed) have the correct suite number. It's 3807. That's it. We hope to see you at 2005 industry events.

## Here are some snapshots of the IHRA membership:

### Growing every month, IHRA now has 240 member firms.

The average size of firm is 17 employees

The median size of firm is 6 employees

- 63 firms have 1-3 employees
- 85 firms have 4-6 employees
- 42 firms have 7-10 employees
- 30 firms have 11-20 employees
- 6 firms have 45-85 employees
- 2 firms have 100-135 employees
- 1 firm has 200 employees
- 1 firm has 320 employees
- 1 firm has 500 employees
- 1 firm has 650 employees

***An IHRA member firm is an experienced element in the marketing channel. More than half have been in business for at least 20 years.***

1 since **1917**; 2 since **1934**; 1 since **1935**;

5 for **50 - 59 years**; 17 for **40 - 49 years**;

22 for **30 - 39 years**; 75 for **20 - 29 years**;

55 for **10 - 19 years**

See page 4 for the products IHRA Member firms sell - or - are prepared to sell.

***One-third of the original (1993) Charter Members of IHRA are still in business and continue their support of the association:***

Ach, O' Dea, Crotty & Hotle, Inc.  
 Bang-Knudsen, Inc.  
 BR Marketing Group, Inc.  
 J.L. Buchanan, Inc.  
 Allen B. Carter & Associates  
 Manuel Diaz Mfrs. Rep./dba Manuel Diaz  
 Dworkin-Rill Co., Inc.  
 Enterprise/Skyliner Sales & Marketing  
 GM Partners  
 Hynes Inc.  
 Intex Corp.  
 Kettler, Muenz & Young, Inc.  
 Kroll Marketing Company  
 David S. Lapine, Inc.  
 Madlar Marketing, Inc.  
 Markiewicz-Cook Associates, Inc.  
 Nicholson Sales & Marketing  
 The Rooney Corp.  
 Schutz-Oine Sales Group  
 Southern Buckeye Marketing Group  
 Jack L. Wallace Company

***And, 40 more for at least 10 years:***

Access Sales Associates  
 Anchors Sales  
 Anthony James Marketing Co.  
 Berlin Werkstell & Associates  
 Campbell Marketing  
 Jerry Cangiano, Inc. / Cangiano-Kefor  
 Carney Braun Inc.  
 Carolina Atlantic Corporation  
 D. R. & J. Manufacturers Representatives  
 Herbert Decker Associates  
 Desco Marketing Corp.  
 Drew & Associates  
 Dugan-Bliss & Associates, Inc.  
 Jim Fitzgerald & Associates / Target Marketing  
 Fleishman & Znorski Associates, Inc.  
 J & K Marketing, Inc.  
 Chip Komlos & Co.  
 Lifestyle Marketing Group  
 Michael James & Associates  
 The Mittelman Group  
 MJ Marketing Group, Inc.  
 Morehead-Schilling Marketing, Inc.  
 Paul K. O'Rourke Company, Inc.  
 Patalidis & Associates  
 Doug Paul & Associates  
 Platt Marketing  
 Primary Marketing  
 Pro Sales  
 Professional Sales & Marketing, Inc.  
 Quality Marketing & Sales  
 RDTM Inc.  
 Rothman-Berger Group, Inc.  
 Silberstein Associates, Inc.  
 Southern Central Marketing  
 Steinlauf Marketing Group  
 Sturman And Co., Inc.  
 Ben Tally & Associates  
 Stan Tashman & Associates, Inc.  
 Tausey/Golden Sales Associates, Inc.  
 U.S. Sales & Marketing Associates

## Products IHRA Members Sell or are Prepared to Sell by % of Firms

### Product/Category (Alpha)

|                                      |     |                                    |     |                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Albums .....                         | 10% | Plastics .....                     | 24% | Placemats .....                      | 20% |
| Auto Cleaners .....                  | 11% | Plastic Storage Totes/Bins .....   | 29% | Household Cleaners .....             | 20% |
| Bakeware .....                       | 63% | Power Toothbrushes .....           | 9%  | Health & Beauty .....                | 19% |
| Bath .....                           | 25% | Refrigerators .....                | 6%  | Laundry .....                        | 19% |
| BBQ .....                            | 33% | Safety .....                       | 10% | Picture Frames .....                 | 19% |
| Beverageware .....                   | 28% | Salt & Pepper Shakers .....        | 22% | Outdoor & Indoor .....               | 18% |
| Books .....                          | 9%  | School Supplies .....              | 14% | Pet Supplies .....                   | 18% |
| Candles .....                        | 27% | Scrapbooks .....                   | 6%  | Furniture .....                      | 18% |
| Cameras .....                        | 9%  | Seasonal Furniture .....           | 24% | Halloween .....                      | 18% |
| Candy .....                          | 11% | Seasonal Outdoor .....             | 25% | Garage Storage .....                 | 17% |
| Christmas .....                      | 29% | Serving Bowls/Platters .....       | 26% | Gourmet Food .....                   | 17% |
| Cleaning .....                       | 25% | Sewing Notions .....               | 7%  | Shower/Bath Caddies .....            | 17% |
| Clocks .....                         | 21% | Shower/Bath Caddies .....          | 17% | Office .....                         | 16% |
| Closet & Storage .....               | 57% | Sinkware .....                     | 16% | Sinkware .....                       | 16% |
| Coasters .....                       | 13% | Small Electrics .....              | 58% | Sporting Goods .....                 | 16% |
| Collectables .....                   | 9%  | Snacks .....                       | 10% | Toys .....                           | 16% |
| Computer Software .....              | 7%  | Sporting Goods .....               | 16% | Consumer Electronics .....           | 15% |
| Consumer Electronics .....           | 15% | Stationery .....                   | 12% | Lighting .....                       | 15% |
| Cookware .....                       | 68% | Tablecloths .....                  | 15% | Electrical .....                     | 15% |
| Craft Storage .....                  | 8%  | Table Top .....                    | 59% | Juvenile .....                       | 15% |
| Decorative Accessories .....         | 44% | Textiles .....                     | 39% | Tablecloths .....                    | 15% |
| Dinnerware .....                     | 32% | Toiletry Products .....            | 9%  | Floorcare .....                      | 14% |
| Electrical .....                     | 15% | Tools .....                        | 13% | Lamps .....                          | 14% |
| Flatware .....                       | 26% | Toys .....                         | 16% | School Supplies .....                | 14% |
| Floorcare .....                      | 14% | Trays .....                        | 14% | Trays .....                          | 14% |
| Framed Art .....                     | 13% | Video & Prerecorded Tapes & CDs .. | 8%  | Party Goods .....                    | 14% |
| Furniture .....                      | 18% | Wall Decor .....                   | 13% | Coasters .....                       | 13% |
| Furniture/RTA .....                  | 41% | Washers .....                      | 4%  | Tools .....                          | 13% |
| Gadgets & Cutlery .....              | 70% | Water Coolers .....                | 7%  | Framed Art .....                     | 13% |
| Garage Storage .....                 | 17% |                                    |     | Mirrors .....                        | 13% |
| General Merchandise .....            | 28% | <b>Product/Category (%)</b>        |     | Wall Decor .....                     | 13% |
| Giftwares .....                      | 56% | Housewares .....                   | 90% | Napkin Holders .....                 | 12% |
| Gourmet Food .....                   | 17% | Gadgets & Cutlery .....            | 70% | Stationery .....                     | 12% |
| Halloween .....                      | 18% | Cookware .....                     | 68% | Candy .....                          | 11% |
| Hardware .....                       | 56% | Bakeware .....                     | 63% | Auto Cleaners .....                  | 11% |
| Health & Beauty .....                | 19% | Table Top .....                    | 59% | Novelty .....                        | 10% |
| Home Security .....                  | 10% | Small Electrics .....              | 58% | Home Security .....                  | 10% |
| Household Cleaners .....             | 20% | Closet & Storage .....             | 57% | Snacks .....                         | 10% |
| Housewares .....                     | 90% | Giftwares .....                    | 56% | Albums .....                         | 10% |
| Juvenile .....                       | 15% | Hardware .....                     | 56% | Safety .....                         | 10% |
| Kitchen Cabinet/Drawer Storage ..    | 20% | Decorative Accessories .....       | 44% | Power Toothbrushes .....             | 9%  |
| Lamps .....                          | 14% | Furniture/RTA .....                | 41% | Toiletry Products .....              | 9%  |
| Laundry .....                        | 19% | Textiles .....                     | 39% | Books .....                          | 9%  |
| Lawn & Garden .....                  | 30% | BBQ .....                          | 33% | Cameras .....                        | 9%  |
| Lighting .....                       | 15% | Dinnerware .....                   | 32% | Collectables .....                   | 9%  |
| Lumber & By-Prdcts, Raw Mtrils ..... | 6%  | Lawn & Garden .....                | 30% | Photo .....                          | 9%  |
| Medical .....                        | 5%  | Christmas .....                    | 29% | Craft Storage .....                  | 8%  |
| Microwave Ovens .....                | 8%  | Plastic Storage Totes/Bins .....   | 29% | Microwave Ovens .....                | 8%  |
| Mirrors .....                        | 13% | Beverageware .....                 | 28% | Video & Prerecorded Tapes & CDs ..   | 8%  |
| Napkin Holders .....                 | 12% | General Merchandise .....          | 28% | Sewing Notions .....                 | 7%  |
| Novelty .....                        | 10% | Candles .....                      | 27% | Computer Software .....              | 7%  |
| Office .....                         | 16% | Serving Bowls/Platters .....       | 26% | Organic & Natural Food .....         | 7%  |
| Oral Irrigators .....                | 5%  | Flatware .....                     | 26% | Water Coolers .....                  | 7%  |
| Organic & Natural Food .....         | 7%  | Seasonal Outdoor .....             | 25% | Scrapbooks .....                     | 6%  |
| Outdoor & Indoor .....               | 18% | Bath .....                         | 25% | Lumber & By-Prdcts, Raw Mtrils ..... | 6%  |
| Party Goods .....                    | 14% | Cleaning .....                     | 25% | Refrigerators .....                  | 6%  |
| Personal Care .....                  | 23% | Plastics .....                     | 24% | Medical .....                        | 5%  |
| Pet Supplies .....                   | 18% | Seasonal Furniture .....           | 24% | Oral Irrigators .....                | 5%  |
| Photo .....                          | 9%  | Personal Care .....                | 23% | Washers .....                        | 4%  |
| Picture Frames .....                 | 19% | Salt & Pepper Shakers .....        | 22% |                                      |     |
| Placemats .....                      | 20% | Clocks .....                       | 21% |                                      |     |
|                                      |     | Kitchen Cabinet/Drawer Storage ..  | 20% |                                      |     |

**2004 - 2005 (partial) INDUSTRY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**October**

The Pan Asian Food and Beverage Trade Show  
 October 03 - October 05, 2004  
 Toronto, Canada

New York Home Textiles Show  
 October 08- October 11, 2004  
 New York, NY



October 8 - October 11, 2004  
[www.thegourmetshow.com/](http://www.thegourmetshow.com/)

Natural Products Expo East  
 October 14 - October 17, 2004  
 Washington, DC

Coffee Fest Seattle  
 October 15 - October 17, 2004  
 Seattle, WA (425-283-5058)

SIAL Paris  
 October 17 - October 21, 2004  
 Paris, France

New York Fall Tabletop Market at 225  
 October 30 - November 04, 2004  
 New York, NY

New York Fall Tabletop Market at 41 Madison  
 October 30 - November 04, 2004  
 New York, NY

**November**

Gifts & Home Products  
 November 11 - November 13, 2004  
 Singapore

New York Gift Cash & Carry Show  
 November 13 - November 16, 2004  
 New York, NY

San Francisco Home Show  
 November 13 - November 16, 2004  
 San Francisco, CA

**2005**

**January**

Specialty Tea Institute, Certification Seminar  
 January 22 - January 23, 2005  
 San Francisco, CA

Canadian Gift and Tableware Association  
 January 30 - February 3, 2005  
 Toronto, ON, Canada

**March**



March 20 - March 22, 2005  
[www.housewares.org](http://www.housewares.org)

**April**

SIAL Montreal  
 April 13 - April 15, 2005  
 Montreal, QU, Canada

8th Annual Specialty Tea Institute Symposium  
 April 15 - April 16, 2005  
 Seattle, WA

Specialty Coffee Ass'n of America Conf & Exhibition  
 April 15 - April 18, 2005  
 Seattle, WA

**May**

Las Vegas Gourmet Housewares Show  
 May 17 - May 19, 2005  
 Las Vegas, NV

National Hardware Show with Lawn & Garden World  
 May 17 - May 19, 2005  
 Las Vegas, NV

Kehe Show  
 May 23 - May 25, 2005  
 Chicago, IL

**August**

Canadian Gift and Tableware Association  
 August 7 - August 11, 2005  
 Toronto, ON, Canada

For a complete list of ECRM-EPPS Conferences, see their website at: <http://www.ecrm-epps.com>

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and the National Hardware Shows**



If you are attending — or might be thinking of attending — either or both of these 2005 industry shows, you should take advantage of these special prices on deluxe accommodations for IHRA members. The Stardust Resort & Casino is conveniently located to the Las Vegas Convention Center (The Gourmet Show and Hardware Show location) and the Sands Expo & Convention Center (The Hardware Show location, only).

**Stardust Nightly Room Rates:  
(All rates plus applicable taxes)**

Sunday - Thursday  
May 15 - May 19, 2005  
West Tower: \$65  
Spa Suites: \$115

Friday & Saturday Nights  
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Spa Suites: \$185

**For reservations, call the Stardust toll-free:**

**(866) 281-1034**

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**RESERVE, TODAY!** These rooms will go fast!



May 17-19, 2005 Las Vegas Convention Center



# Manufacturers Seeking IHRA Field Sales Professionals

**Products:** Vinyl Yard Goods: Fleeced-back vinyl tablecloth, wet-look print vinyl, expanded knitback vinyl, wide range of clear plastic in #4 gauge to #80 gauge. Matte frost plastics, colored clear plastics. More and new items available.

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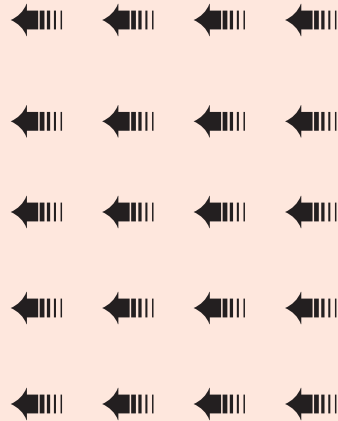
987 Grand Street  
Brooklyn NY 11211  
(516) 569-0371 Fax: (516) 569-3812

**Contact:** Bernie Schreiber, Director of Sales

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

**Commission Rate:** 3 - 8%      **Nat'l Sales:** N/A

## IHRA **REPorter**® October 2004



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## Manufacturers: Are You Looking for Well-Qualified, Performance-Committed, Field Sales Professionals?

*Find them quickly, easily and  
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exclusive marketing services . . .*

### **The IHRA Locator**

A directory of field sales professionals  
by territories covered, type of products  
handled, type of customers sold to/through  
and complete details about their companies.

### **Instant *HOT* Lines**

A onetime eMail or fax that  
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A special page (or pages) of listings in the  
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This is an IHRA service to keep members advised of lines available. The listing of a manufacturer should in no way be construed as an endorsement of that line by IHRA, it being the obligation of each member to make their own evaluation of the line.

**IHRA MEMBERS:**

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

**Just find your business home state and call Pat Brown or John Doyle.**

**Call PAT BROWN** at 800-854-4636

if your business is in:

|            |              |              |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Arizona    | Minnesota    | Oregon       |
| Arkansas   | Missouri     | South Dakota |
| California | Montana      | Texas        |
| Idaho      | Nevada       | Utah         |
| Illinois   | New Mexico   | Wisconsin    |
| Iowa       | North Dakota | Wyoming      |
| Kansas     | Oklahoma     |              |

**Call JOHN DOYLE** at 888-243-0174

if your business is in:

|             |               |                |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Alabama     | Maine         | North Carolina |
| Connecticut | Maryland      | South Carolina |
| Colorado    | Massachusetts | Tennessee      |
| Delaware    | Michigan      | Virginia       |
| Florida     | Missouri      | Vermont        |
| Georgia     | New Hampshire | W. Virginia    |
| Indiana     | New Jersey    |                |
| Kentucky    | New York      |                |

**The REPorter**®

is published  
monthly for

**INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES  
REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION**

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**Home • Housewares • Hardware  
Multiple-Line, Field Sales Professional:**

If you're not a member of IHRA, you owe it to yourself to join the organization that is your voice in the industry and the manufacturers' resource for finding **Well-Qualified, Performance-Committed, Field Sales Professionals.**

For complete information about "first-timer" membership and an application, contact:



INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES  
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