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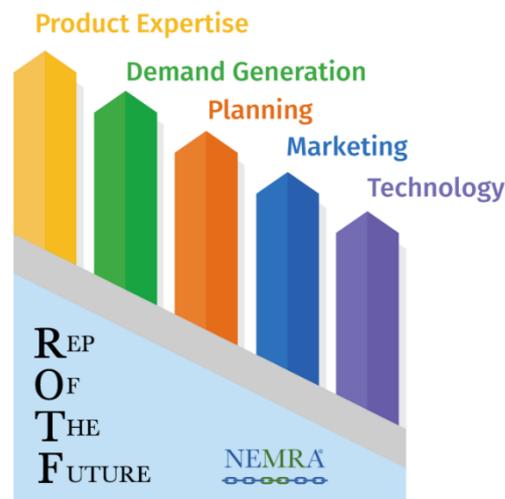


NATIONAL ELECTRICAL MANUFACTURERS  
REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION

## Executive Summary

# 2025 Rep of The Future Report

## *Vision 2030*



## A NEMRA Strategic Advisory Council Initiative

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## Rep of the Future 2025

### Executive Summary

#### Context

In 2019, NEMRA commissioned the fourth *Rep of the Future* report. The 2020 edition introduced the **Five Pillars of Success**—planning, product expertise, technology, marketing, and demand generation—which have since become “table stakes” for thriving firms.

Over the past five years, the industry has been reshaped by:

- **COVID-19:** Redefined processes and culture.
- **Technology:** Transformed products, markets, and expectations; speed and information are now baseline requirements.
- **Demographics:** Baby boomer retirements, rising turnover, and over 125 distributor acquisitions (\$11B in revenue) have accelerated consolidation and heightened performance pressures.

The result: change is the new normal, and expectations are rising.

#### Manufacturer of the Future

Released in 2024, the *Manufacturer of the Future* report asked: “*What will manufacturers want and expect from their independent reps?*” Manufacturers identified four drivers—**consolidation, efficiency, local demand, and people**—and eight critical roles for reps, including **business leader, distribution facilitator, analytics provider, trainer, marketer, field specialist, and end-user coverage**.

#### Emerging Themes for 2025 and Beyond

- **Macro-economic shifts:** Agility and data-driven planning are essential in a bifurcating economy.
- **Speed expectations:** Customers and employees alike demand faster, accurate, accessible information.
- **Generational change:** The industry is moving from relationship-centric to performance-based, fueling consolidation and new pressures on reps.



## Succession and Exit Planning

Talent is the core issue. Firms must plan for leadership continuity through role documentation, mentoring, and retention strategies. Exit planning—whether ESOP, sale, or ownership transfer—must ensure continuity, as manufacturers value stability and quality representation above all.

## Rep Firm Landscape

By 2030, the number of independent firms may shrink by **25%**, consolidating into:

1. 4–6 national/quasi-national firms
2. 40–50 regional firms
3. Smaller state-based agencies

**Emerging models:** full-line electrical + lighting firms, direct-sell lines bypassing distribution, and multi-industry diversification. Contracts will evolve toward personalized agreements with clear goals, segmented services, and incentive-based compensation.

## Building Towards 2030

The future path is clear: **plan, invest in people and technology, market effectively, and drive demand.**

1. **Performance:** With stagnant growth, manufacturers define performance as market share gain. Reps must focus more on end-users/contractors—25–30% of sales time today, projected at 60–70% by 2030.
2. **Technology & Data:** CRM, AI, analytics, and digital platforms are essential; data is currency and must be managed carefully.
3. **Marketing:** Dedicated marketing talent is a must-have, acting as a sales multiplier and brand builder.
4. **Metrics:** Beyond commissions, track sales growth, share, commission productivity, distributor satisfaction, and ROI.

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## Conclusion

By 2030, independent manufacturer reps should expect:

- Higher expectations and expanded services in a flat-growth market.
- Fewer rep firms, but more manufacturers seeking representation.
- Greater investment in people and technology.
- Distributor consolidation driving reps to generate end-user demand.
- Marketing as a critical growth driver.
- The **Five Pillars** as the enduring framework for success.

### The Rep of the Future will:

- Have a clear 2030 vision
- Build strong teams and leadership
- Leverage technology and data
- Operate seamlessly with suppliers
- Build “*moats*” for their manufacturers by creating demand and securing customer loyalty across their territory



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