



Bradford's Exchange  
September 2019

## **ECIA Joint Council Fall Meeting a Success**

The three ECIA councils (Distributor, Manufacturer and Independent Manufacturer Representative) met in Savannah last week, September 11-13, for our semi-annual Joint Council Session. Some new council and board positions were decided, including the addition of new board members:

Karim Yasmine, Corporate Vice President, Strategic Supplier Development of Future Electronics

Chris Wadsworth, General Manager of Carlton-Bates

Mark Shiring, President & CEO of ebm-papst

The meetings included sessions where each council met individually to discuss key agenda items, as well as cross functional and joint sessions to address industry-wide issues and share updates from the councils and the association staff. We went into detail on some of the ongoing work of the Global Industry Practices Committee (GIPC). We also received a third quarter economic update, live via streaming, from the National Association of Manufacturer's Chief Economist, Chad Moutrey.

Throughout the meetings, the networking reception and group dinner there was a great spirit of collaboration and excitement about the direction of ECIA. Two areas of focus identified by and discussed in the joint session were 1) implementing a more rigorous project management process to move our initiatives to resolution at a faster pace and 2) substantially expanding our member communications efforts to more effectively educate and engage all of our members on the activities of the association.

In short, for point one, we agreed that council or committee ideas should get surfaced to the board, which approves projects and sets the priorities. Those approved projects get assigned to the appropriate council or committee with clear objectives, established timelines and accountable owners who will report back to the board on a quarterly basis.

To improve our member communication and engagement we will be launching a series of communications tools to augment our newsletter, including webinars, videos, podcasts and personal outreach. Our recently launched new [ecianow.org](http://ecianow.org) website also enables us to better share dynamic content with the association overall, as well as targeting certain topics to specific councils or committees.

Some of the initiatives the association will be addressing going forward include:

- Expanding our authorized inventory listing site to include more participants on a global basis to enhance the customer experience.
- Commissioning a research study with a leading industrial distribution academic institution on the value of distribution. This is intended to be a comprehensive update of the highly regarded 2003 NEDA study, to help suppliers quantify the value of the distributor and independent manufacturer's representative in the demand creation and fulfillment sales process. The updated study will account for some of the sweeping changes and enhancements of distribution offerings over the past decade.
- Standardizing CRM to CRM translation and communication to more efficiently facilitate the exchange of NBO and other important data between manufacturers, their representatives, and potentially distributors.

- Expanding on our tariff best practices work by considering the impact and issues of free trade zones and the challenges around RMAs for tariffed product.
- Partnering with IBM on Blockchain use cases for our industry. We will provide education and platforms to allow our members to participate, while understanding the opportunities and risks. The first two of these, Tradelens and Trust Your Supplier will be shared with our members in the coming weeks.
- Revising and updating demand creation and design registration program best practices. These programs have evolved and, in some cases, devolved over the years and may no longer be meeting the intended need or producing the desired results for the industry.
- Building a more robust global market research perspective working with our reinstated statistics committee, under the leadership of our Chief Analyst, Dale Ford.
- Providing guidelines and best practices for distributor branch product training.

We look forward to sharing more details on each of these initiatives, along with the council activities in coming communications. Please attend our annual [Executive Conference](#) in Chicago October 20-22, to get a detailed ECIA update and hear from our ECIA board members and council chairs. You will also hear from an all-star lineup of expert speakers in technologies, market trends, and leadership principles. See you in Chicago!

Also, mark your calendars for the next ECIA Joint Council Meetings and Dinner, to be held in Austin, TX on February 26, immediately following the ERA Conference. Stay tuned for details!