

Start-up = New Model, Multiple Channels



Apogee Solutions Group

As many know, [Panduit](#) undertook a significant change in the structure of its sales organization this year. Through that process, [Dan Murphy](#) and [V.J. Ladd](#), both formerly with Panduit got the entrepreneurial bug and decided to form an agency. One of their observations in surveying the market was that the electrical and electronic channels were beginning to overlap.

This gave them the idea to start an agency focused on the customer where the customer selects which distributor and channel to support. Manufacturers can retain them to serve both channels or solely one. The reality is that a small subsegment overlaps, depending upon the product offering. The customer (either end-user or installer (contractor)) will make the choice. The benefit is that a manufacturer can have one rep who can balance the channel challenges of both channels.

Dan shared their thought process on why they started Apogee Solutions Group.:

WHY I DECIDED TO START A REP AGENCY?

After almost 25 years, my former employer made changes that created an opportunity for me to explore the next chapter of my career. After discussing many options with my long-time friend and co-worker, V.J. Ladd, we partnered together and founded Apogee Solutions Group, a manufacturers' rep agency focused on filling a cross-industry need we identified as a result of our combined 50 years' experience.

Our background provides us with extensive knowledge of the electrical, electronic, and industrial segments, understanding the channels and seeing how and where they play within the vertical markets. With advances in technology, automation, complexity in design and network needs, the spectrum of products used is constantly increasing, making it more difficult for an account to be serviced by a single channel segment. Due to these advances, there has been an emerging trend of distributors from different segments being pushed, by customer demand, into accounts they normally do not service. For manufacturers, specifically those whose products can cross many verticals, aligning with more than one channel segment can open an entirely new account base, create a great opportunity for vertical market expansion and increase overall access to market.

There are not many options for manufacturers when it comes to rep agencies providing coverage across market segments. Many manufacturers hire rep firms who service a specific segment and then have difficulties expanding into other areas, sometimes areas of strategic growth. Apogee Solutions Group, is truly a cross-functional agency supporting manufacturers in all relevant channel segments and vertical markets. Even in cases where a manufacturer may already have representation in one segment, we can expand that to other segments and to other verticals independently.

Apogee Solutions Group is serving the New England marketplace and is already an ERA member.

So, the rep world is going through change. A couple of commonalities:

- Focus on the end-user market, so demand generation.
- The need to innovate while being flexible (due to manufacturer changes).
- Expansion
- The need for more agency options for manufacturers (and consolidation occurs due to succession planning.)