

*"You are once again our highest-rated presenter. In fact, I would say you are probably our highest-rated presenter of all time." - Association Executive*



## 'Eye-opening,' 'Honest,' 'Crowd-Pleaser'

Industry Expert Mike Marks tells it like it is, and provides insight audiences can act upon.



**Mike Marks is the Managing Partner of Indian River Consulting Group**, an experience-based firm that focuses exclusively on market access and distribution channels. Before co-founding IRCG in April 1987, he worked in distribution management for more than 20 years. Mike always makes an impact with an audience. Two characteristics make groups want him back: He is from the industry. With his experience-based approach, the audience feels like he is one of them. Second: He uses humor to cut to the chase about painful changes in the market, with audience-specific examples. He connects the dots and provides perspective in a way that challenges the audience's thinking. He is irreverent without trying and optimistic without being naive.

He has worked for hundreds of distributor, retail, manufacturer and private equity clients in dozens of lines of trade. Mike is a trusted advisor to senior executives, a permanent University of Innovative Distribution faculty member and a distribution company board director. He is the Senior Research Fellow for the NAW Institute for Distribution Excellence. He is a grandfather and a competitive road racer at the national level.

Mike's speaking engagements have included webinars, workshops, technical sessions for management-level audiences, strategic sessions for executive-level audiences and keynote speeches. Mike will tailor the topics in duration and content to the needs of the client and agenda. Each will include examples that are industry-specific and relevant to the audience to maximize takeaway value.

### Sample of Prior Speaking Clients

AMAROK  
Associated Equipment Distributors  
Affiliated Distributors  
American Supply Association  
Association for High Technology Distribution  
Door & Hardware Institute  
Electro Federation  
Health Industry Distributors Association Foundation  
Irrigation Association  
Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association

Modern Distribution Management  
National Electronic Distributors Association  
National Association of Electrical Distributors  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
NPTA Alliance  
National Wood Flooring Association  
Pro-Link  
Specialty Tools & Fasteners Distributors Association  
University of Innovative Distribution (UID)

Interested? Contact Christina Towers, [ctowers@ircg.com](mailto:ctowers@ircg.com), 321-831-4222

## Sample Speaking Topics

Our team leverages their experience consulting with hundreds of distribution and manufacturing clients over more than three decades to speak to an industry's unique opportunities and challenges. Find previous speaking topics below. **IRCG tailors each presentation to our clients' needs.**

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### Multichannel/Digital Disruption

#### **Redefining the Distributor Sales Paradigm**

If your outside sales reps spend most of their time writing up quotes, providing product information, managing returns and handling supplier issues, you're squandering your most expensive resource. A market-based sales model that incorporates specialized roles and digital tools is more efficient and effective, but to get there, you must realign your financial and sales resources to each customer segment's needs, preferences and growth potential.

#### **Distribution in a Post-Amazon World**

Despite the level of digital disruption that has already affected the distribution industry, the most dramatic changes have yet to come. When the ball drops at the end of 2019, will you have closed some of the gap between you and your most innovative competitors, or will that gap have widened so far that you can no longer cross it? This presentation encourages companies to imagine how digital versions of relationship and trust, order fulfillment and service, capital structures and even companies themselves might affect their strategies moving forward.

#### **The Case for eCommerce**

A common theme in many presentations today is that distributors that haven't yet implemented full-featured ecommerce systems have no choice but to implement expensive new systems right away. But the ecommerce question isn't black and white, and it is best viewed as an opportunity, not a threat. The more compelling case for ecommerce is how it can help you to cut SG&A expenses and convert one-time customers into repeat business.

#### **The Digital Tipping Point: How to Position in a Multichannel World**

Big changes are coming to the way end users shop and buy. This presentation will challenge you to think differently about what you need to serve your customers online and off. (Potential partnership with Real Results Marketing)

#### **Big Data Analytics for Wholesaler-Distributors**

Big data isn't about keeping up with the latest technology trends. It's about finding ways to base your decisions on facts and finding the potential for deeper market access, whether that means investing in new analytics capabilities or making better use of the data you already have. This session, based on practical examples and simple models that don't require new software, will help you analyze your business's resources and market and recalibrate so that you are applying those resources in the most effective way.

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## Sample Speaking Topics



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### Compensation

#### **Adapting Compensation Strategies for the Next Generation**

This presentation will cover compensation expectations of Gen X and Millennials, both debt-laden generations, as well as how distributors can serve the next generation at a lower cost.

#### **Risk vs. Reward: Strategic Sales Force Compensation**

Most compensation programs either provide insufficient rewards for meeting company objectives or over-compensate for the wrong results, eroding distributor profits. There is no universally “best” sales compensation program; each distributor must determine which is best for them. This talk will outline incentives, dynamics, industry trends, and implementation strategies to inform the creation of incentive programs that balance anticipated rewards with the risks inherent to change.

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### Other

#### **Branding Strategies for 2020**

Few people can clearly define what branding is or explain why it is important to have a branding strategy. Attendees will learn a simple, team-oriented approach to brand consistency that builds loyal, more profitable customers. We also present a pragmatic way to narrow the gap between your current brand and ideal brand with out-of-the-box thinking.

#### **Marketing as an Investment**

As marketing leaders, you know the question will inevitably come: “How do I know we are getting a return on our marketing budget?” Instead of deferring to past budgets, marketing leaders should be seeking more revenue responsibility, not less. Learn how marketers can take increased responsibility for ROI through smarter KPIs, better customer segmentation, and sales alignment.

#### **How M&A Affects the Competitive Landscape**

Every industry is going through some level of consolidation, but each market’s stage in the consolidation cycle will determine the impact on that market’s competitive landscape. Attend this session to better navigate the M&A-driven changes that have already occurred and to imagine the role your company might have as your markets continue to consolidate.

#### **Sustaining Growth: Making the Leap from Lifestyle to Professional Management**

Most distributors are run by a senior executive who is also the majority shareholder. The behaviors that made these executives effective early on – a focus on cash, risk aversion, hands-on management and, usually, a dislike of change – can become less effective as businesses grow. If you want your business to grow beyond your own contributions, you may want to transition to professional management. This talk will help you decide whether to make that transition, and if so, how.

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