

Being a part of a committed community with a rapidly growing membership base are just two of the benefits High Touch receives from its membership and participation in APRO.

First, APRO has a growing membership base. This is important for vendors such as High Touch, whose business is primarily in the rent-to-own industry. As our industry is succeeding and growing, our company can be succeeding and growing along with it. To help foster this industry's membership growth, we've never hesitated to give back. We're a major sponsor of the annual APRO Con-

A vendor's view

vention and Buying Show and have increased our booth space at this event by 25 percent over the past four years. We also continue to be sponsors of the APRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., and try to sponsor many of the growing number of regional trade expos around the country.

For High Touch, having a place among a growing membership base also gives us the opportunity as a vendor to lend our time and expertise to support the several state associations. Not only do we participate in each association's annual events, but I also have served as the vendor liaison to the Missouri Rental Dealers Association. I currently serve on the Ohio Rental Dealers board of directors and as the vendor liaison to the Texas Association of Rental Agencies.



By JOHN ROGERS
Past APRO board member

The growing number of referrals we receive from friends and acquaintances around the industry continues to increase the number of dealers and stores using our software for point-of-sale and accounting. This is a testament to how business builds upon business in this growing, close-knit community.

These close business relationships are the second key benefit of membership in APRO. News travels fast in our industry—both good news and bad. Vendors who want to offer good products at competitive prices with quality support will find that establishing one customer establishes many. This makes entry and success

for any vendor easier than in other markets. There is a high degree of loyalty among the membership and once established as a quality company, a vendor can count on many years of productive and profitable business.

And by the way, the benefits of APRO membership also serve as rules for continued success. The more that a vendor pitches in to help grow and serve the membership, the larger a piece of the business pie he or she has the chance to receive. By this rule, vendors who strive to offer quality products and services to industry members will be rewarded.

We haven't always won business that we've proposed, but I can say assuredly that our time and support at the state and national levels has given us a welcomed access to decision makers that might not otherwise have been granted. At times we've been allowed to make proposals in circumstances where our products might not have been the best fit. But instead of a simple "no" to our request to make a proposal, High Touch was at least given the chance to make a presentation and make the sale. I believe is the direct result of the goodwill fostered by our efforts on behalf of the industry.

APRO not only provides a forum in which vendors and dealers can interact, but it fosters that interaction and provides the necessary channels for both parties to get the best deal possible. APRO is one of the few industry associations that elevates vendor representation to a board-level position. Not only does our industry maintain a sitting vendor advisory committee, but the head of this committee also sits on the APRO board of directors. More than any other factor, this is evidence to High Touch of the importance APRO places on vendor issues and concerns, especially on such matters as site locations for annual conventions and buying shows.

For High Touch, our APRO membership gives us a better opportunity to continue building our company and the honor to continue helping build such a fine national association. We look forward to many years of mutual benefit between industry members and vendors alike. ■

John Rogers is director of sales at High Touch in Wichita, Kansas.

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